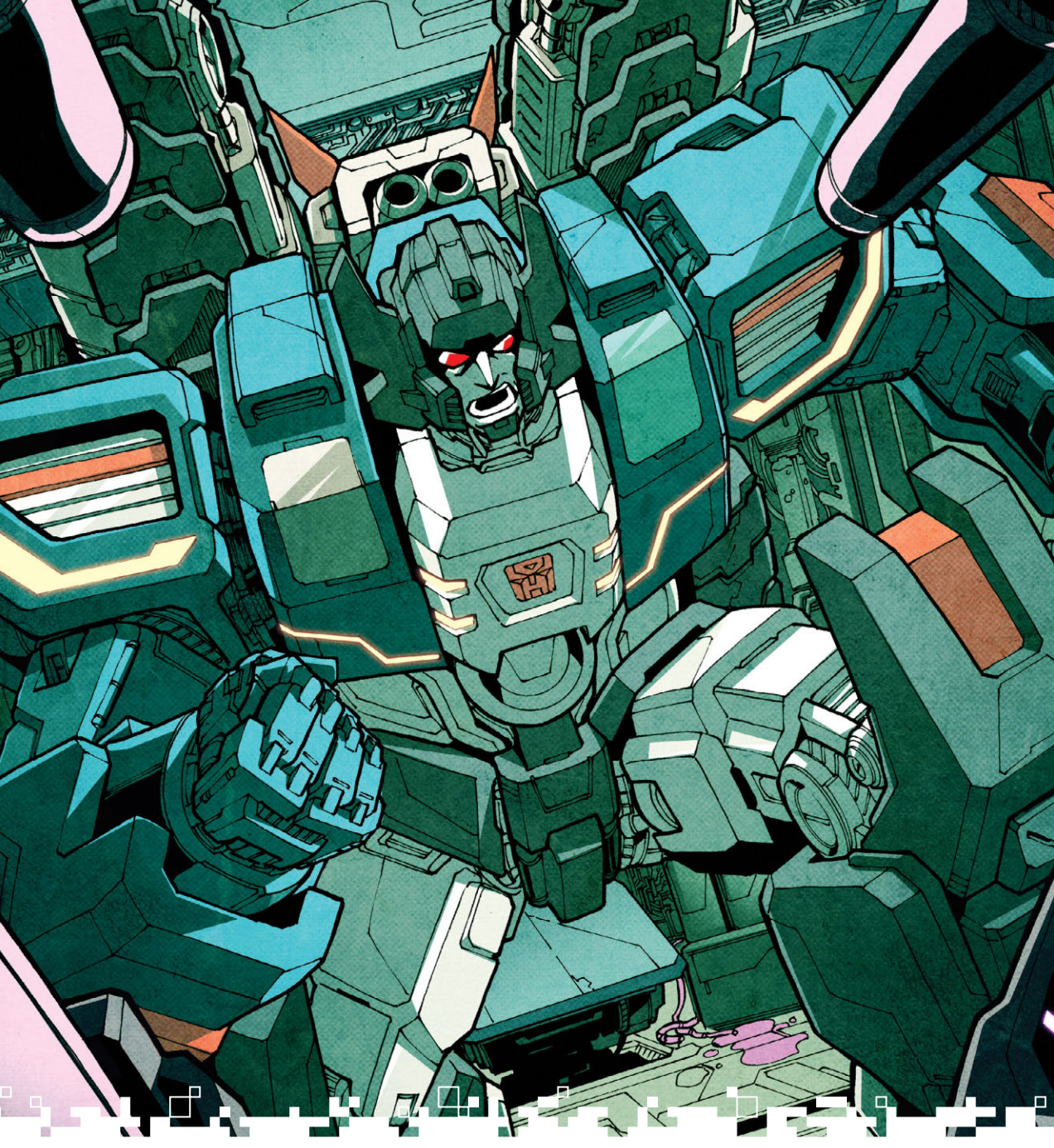
THE TRANSFORMERS
MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE
VOLUME 2



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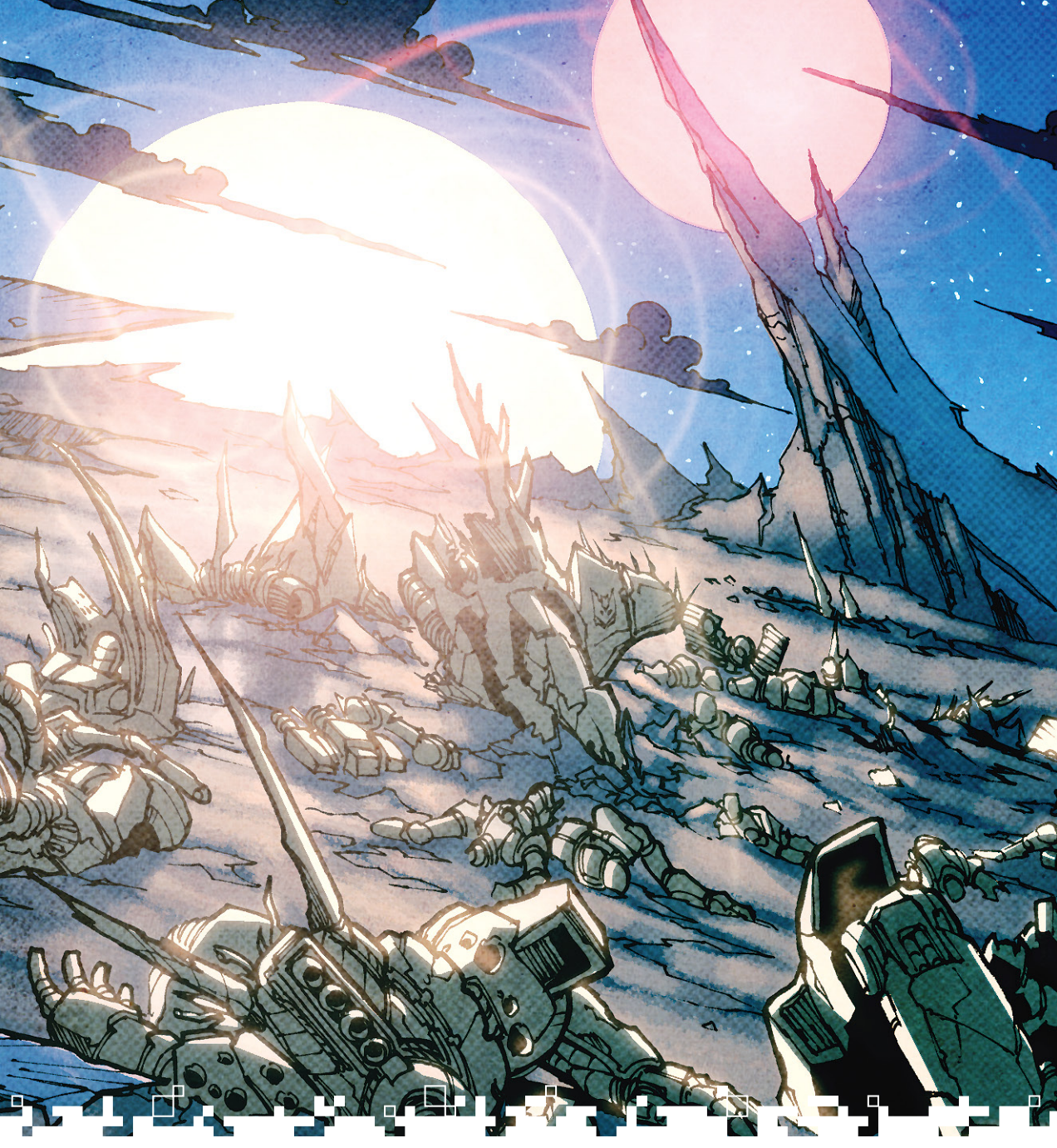

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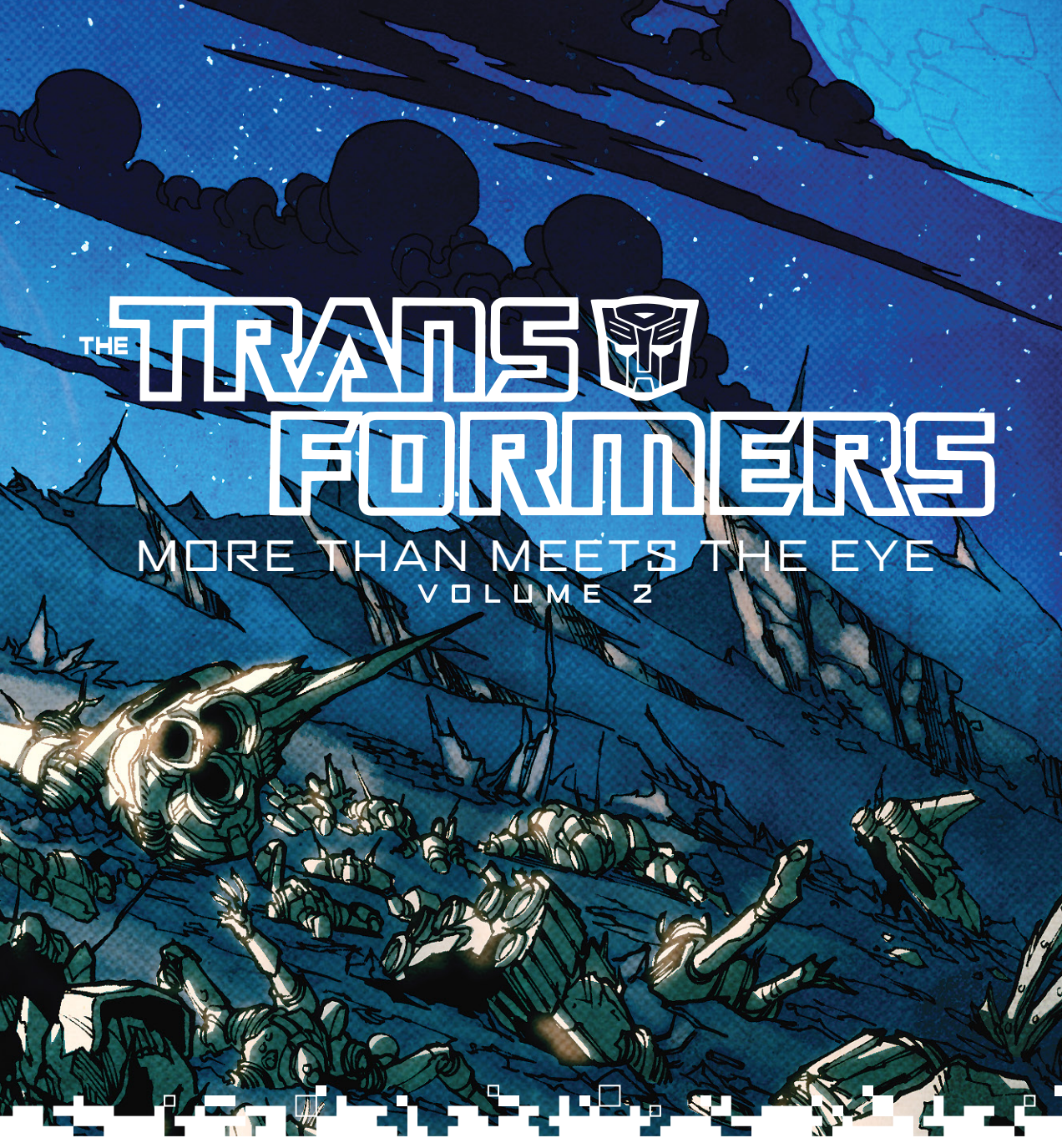

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☐ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #4 COVER A
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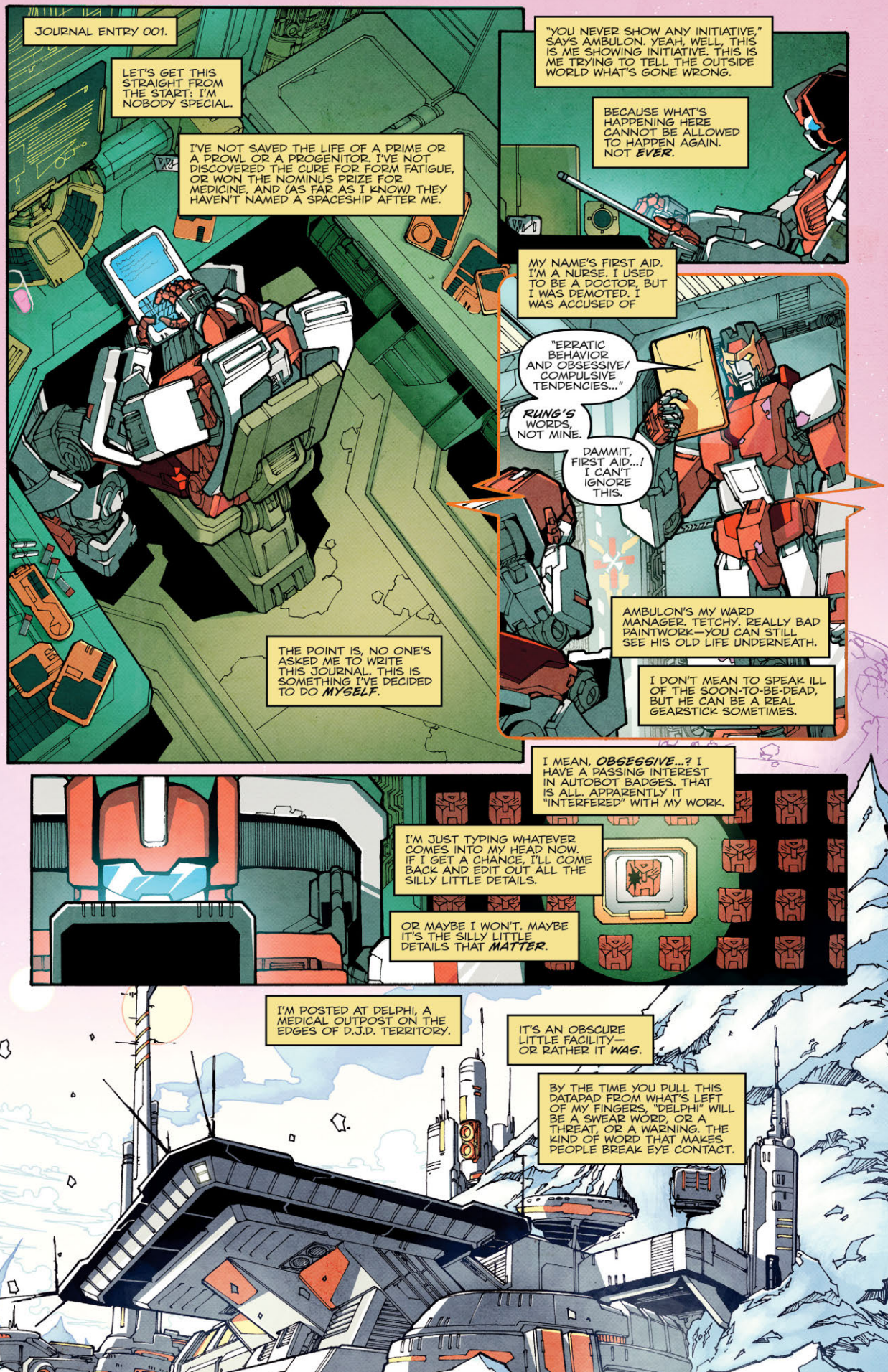
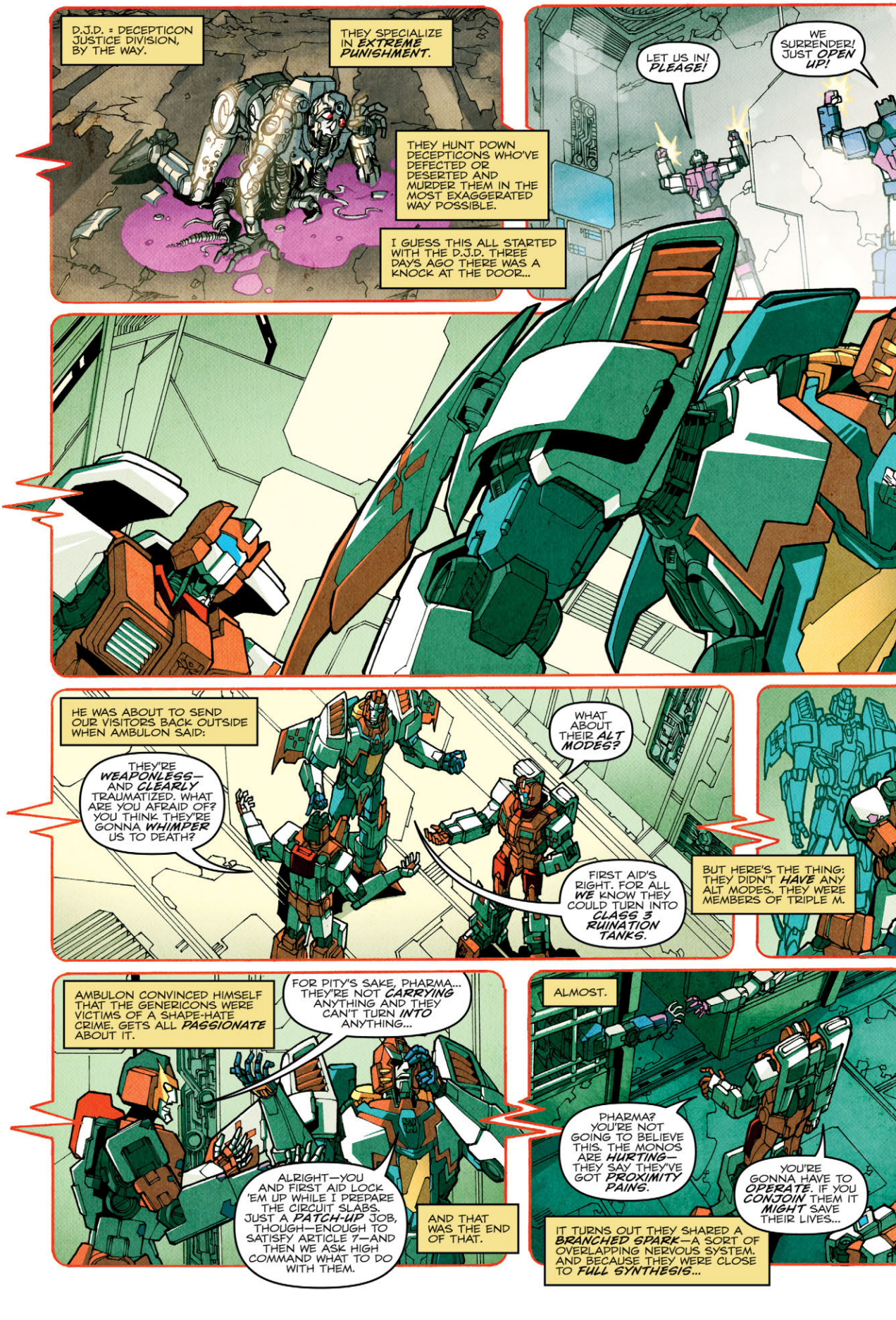
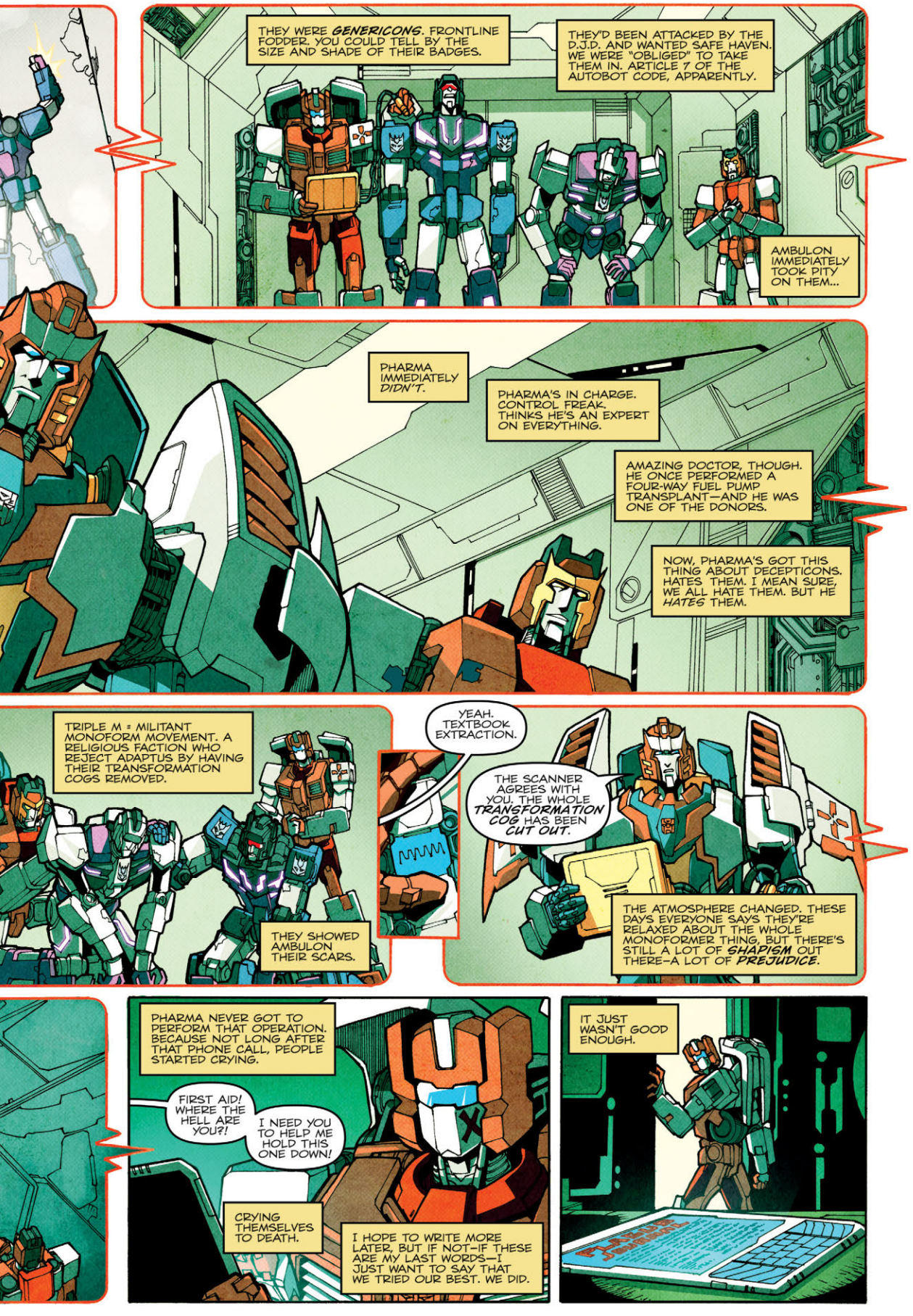
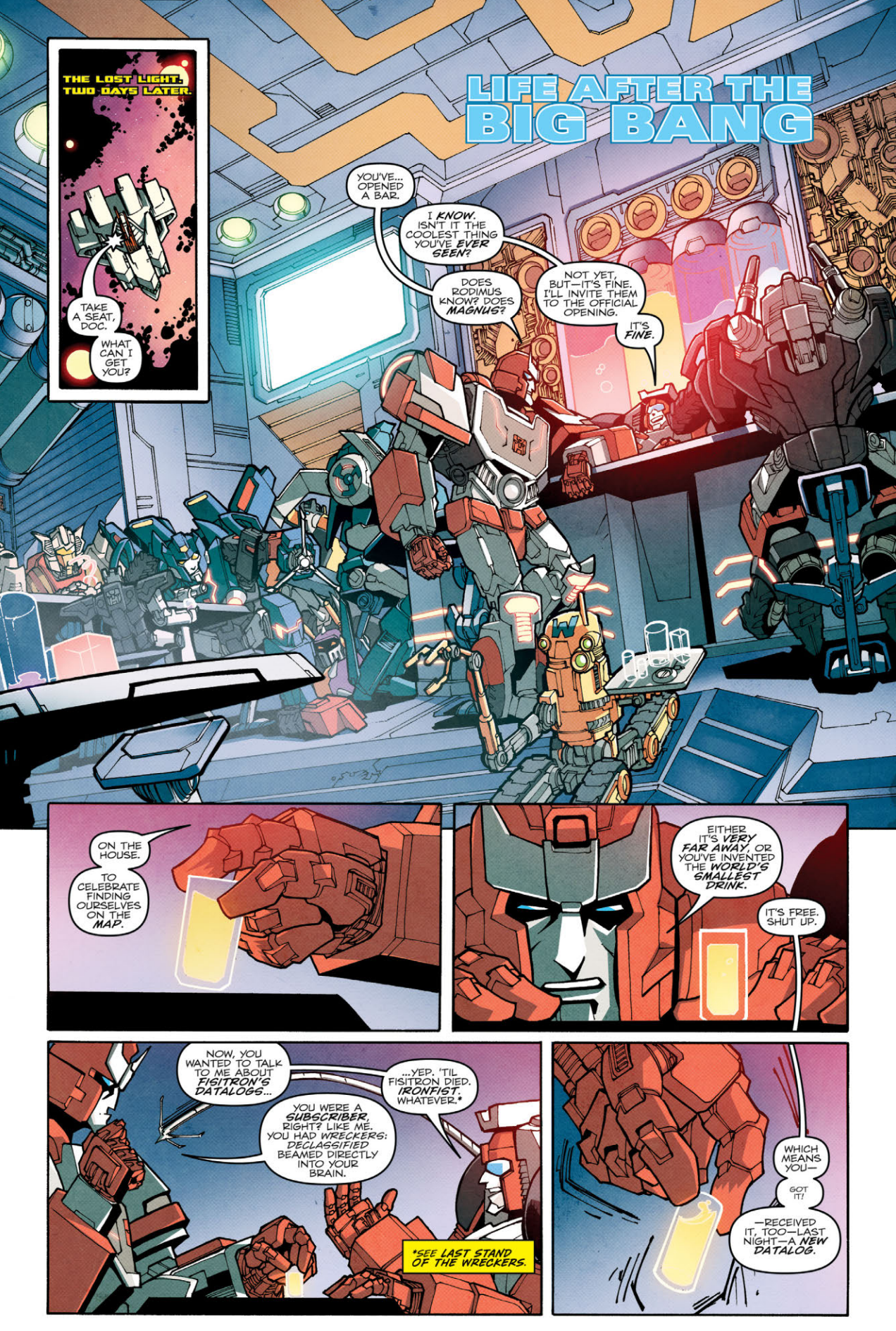
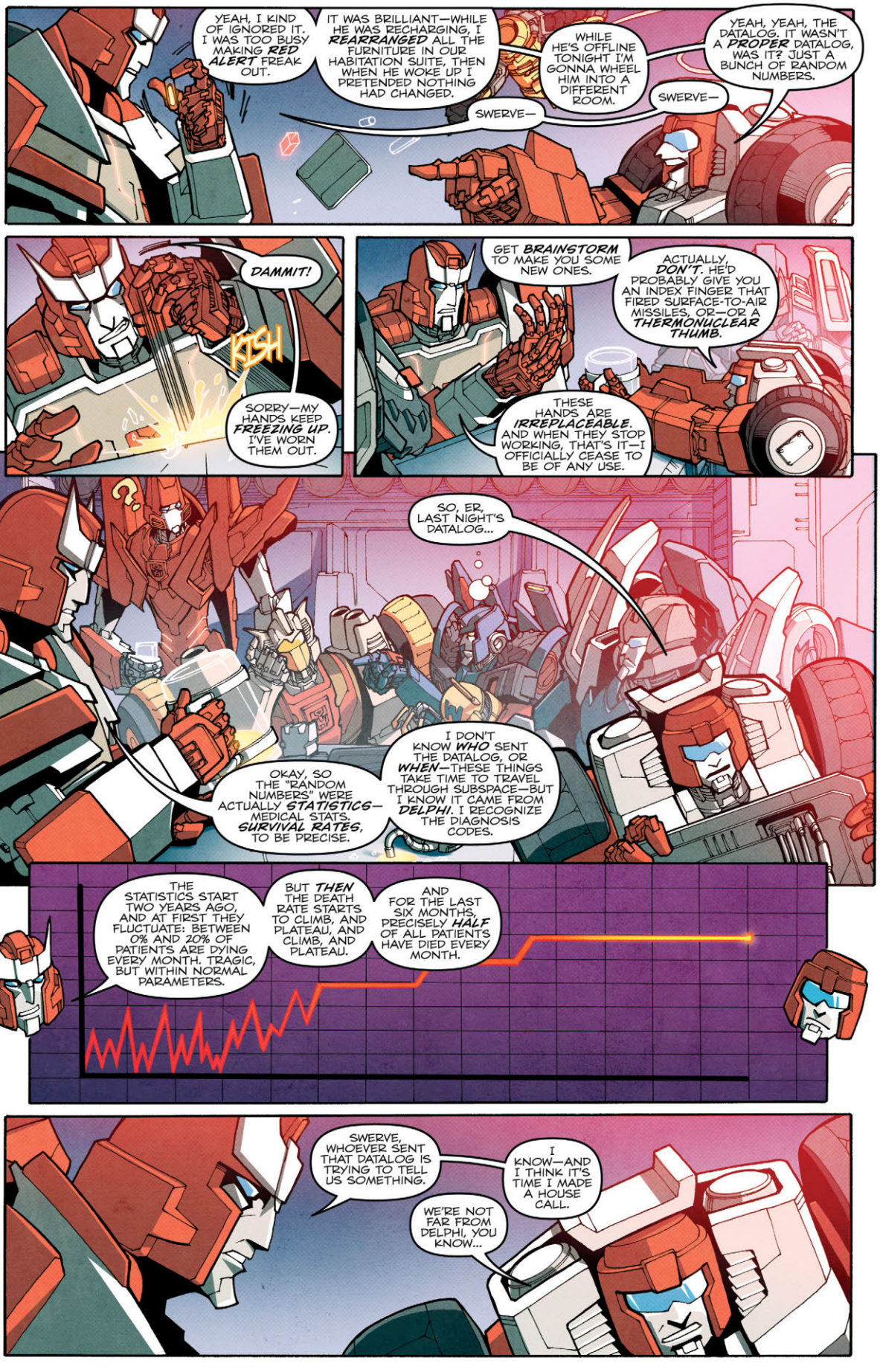
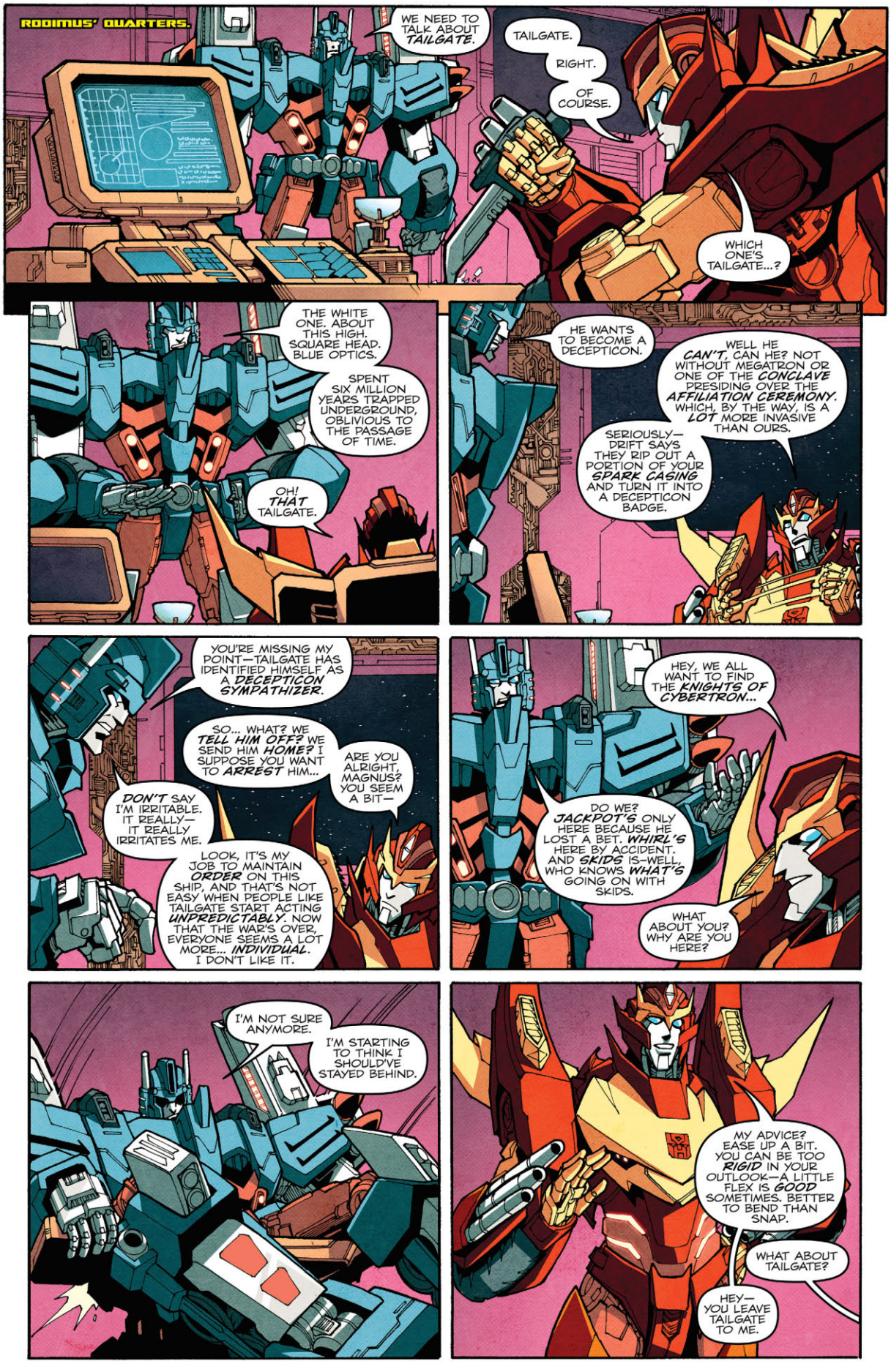

JOURNAL ENTRY 001.
LET'S GET THIS STRAIGHT FROM THE START: I'M NOBODY SPECIAL.
I'VE NOT SAVED THE LIFE OF A PRIME OR A PROWL OR A PROGENITOR. I'VE NOT DISCOVERED THE CURE FOR FORM FATIGUE, OR WON THE NOMINUS PRIZE FOR MEDICINE, AND (AS FAR AS I KNOW) THEY HAVEN'T NAMED A SPACESHIP AFTER ME.
THE POINT IS, NO ONE'S ASKED ME TO WRITE THIS JOURNAL. THIS IS SOMETHING I'VE DECIDED TO DO MYSELF.
"YOU NEVER SHOW ANY INITIATIVE," SAYS AMBULON. YEAH, WELL, THIS IS ME SHOWING INITIATIVE. THIS IS ME TRYING TO TELL THE OUTSIDE WORLD WHAT'S GONE WRONG.
BECAUSE WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN AGAIN. NOT EVER.
MY NAME'S FIRST AID. I'M A NURSE. I USED TO BE A DOCTOR, BUT I WAS DEMOTED. I WAS ACCUSED OF
"ERRATIC BEHAVIOR AND OBSESSIVE/COMPULSIVE TENDENCIES..."
RUNG'S WORDS, NOT MINE.
DAMMIT, FIRST AID...! I CAN'T IGNORE THIS.
AMBULON'S MY WARD MANAGER. TETCHY. REALLY BAD PAINTWORK—YOU CAN STILL SEE HIS OLD LIFE UNDERNEATH.
I DON'T MEAN TO SPEAK ILL OF THE SOON-TO-BE-DEAD, BUT HE CAN BE A REAL GEARSTICK SOMETIMES.
I MEAN, OBSESSIVE...? I HAVE A PASSING INTEREST IN AUTOBOT BADGES. THAT IS ALL. APPARENTLY IT "INTERFERED" WITH MY WORK.
I'M JUST TYPING WHATEVER COMES INTO MY HEAD NOW. IF I GET A CHANCE, I'LL COME BACK AND EDIT OUT ALL THE SILLY LITTLE DETAILS.
OR MAYBE I WON'T. MAYBE IT'S THE SILLY LITTLE DETAILS THAT MATTER.
I'M POSTED AT DELPHI, A MEDICAL OUTPOST ON THE EDGES OF D.J.D. TERRITORY.
IT'S AN OBSCURE LITTLE FACILITY—OR RATHER IT WAS.
BY THE TIME YOU PULL THIS DATAPAD FROM WHAT'S LEFT OF MY FINGERS, "DELPHI" WILL BE A SWEAR WORD, OR A THREAT, OR A WARNING. THE KIND OF WORD THAT MAKES PEOPLE BREAK EYE CONTACT.

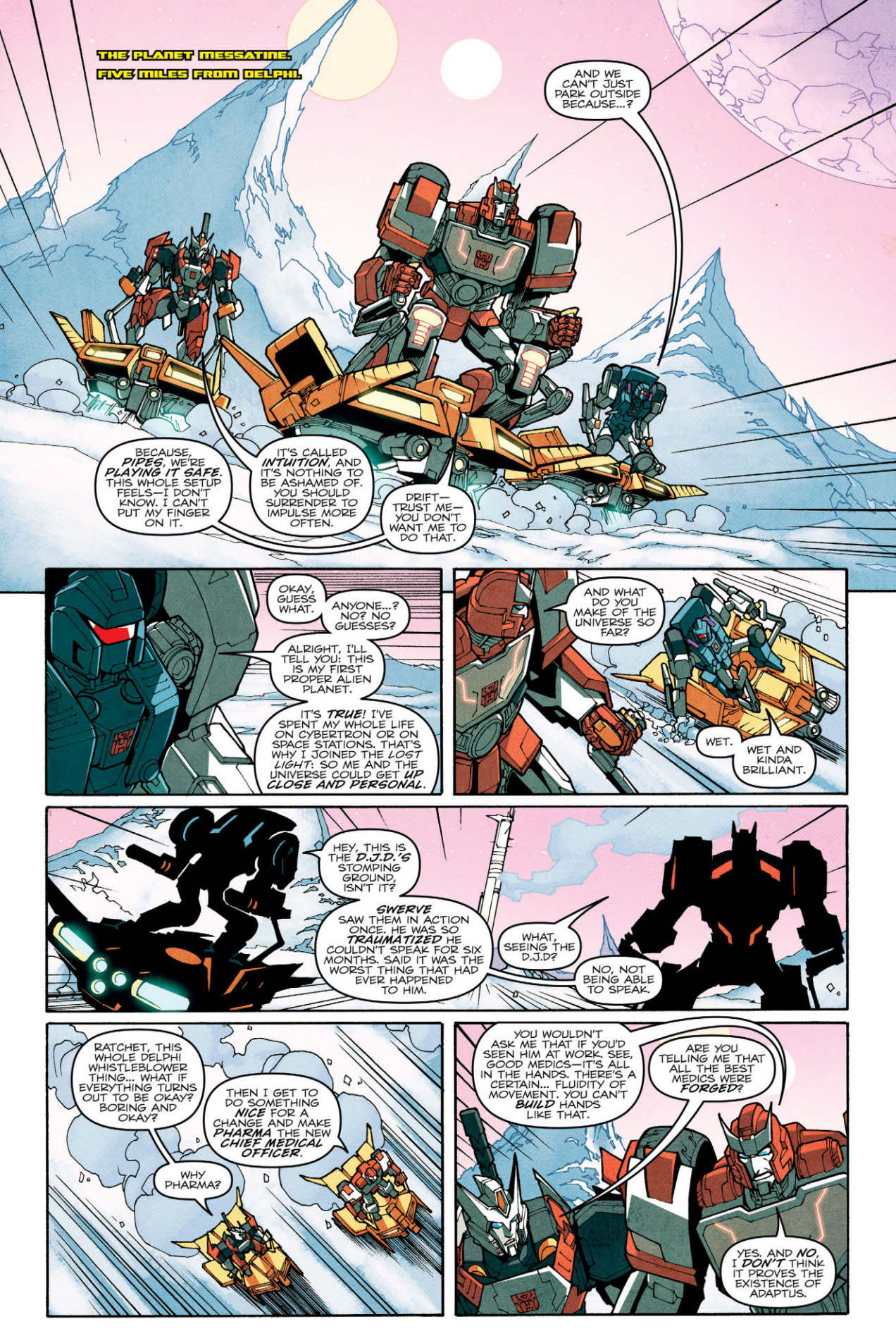

D.J.D. = DECEPTICON JUSTICE DIVISION, BY THE WAY.
THEY SPECIALIZE IN EXTREME PUNISHMENT.
THEY HUNT DOWN DECEPTICONS WHO'VE DEFECTED OR DESERTED AND MURDER THEM IN THE MOST EXAGGERATED WAY POSSIBLE.
I GUESS THIS ALL STARTED WITH THE D.J.D. THREE DAYS AGO THERE WAS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR...
LET US IN! PLEASE!
WE SURRENDER! JUST OPEN UP!
HE WAS ABOUT TO SEND OUR VISITORS BACK OUTSIDE WHEN AMBULON SAID:
THEY'RE WEAPONLESS— AND CLEARLY TRAUMATIZED. WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF? YOU THINK THEY'RE GONNA WHIMPER US TO DEATH?
WHAT ABOUT THEIR ALT MODES?
FIRST AID'S RIGHT. FOR ALL WE KNOW THEY COULD TURN INTO CLASS 3 RUINATION TANKS.
BUT HERE'S THE THING: THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY ALT MODES. THEY WERE MEMBERS OF TRIPLE M.
AMBULON CONVINCED HIMSELF THAT THE GENERICONS WERE VICTIMS OF A SHAPE-HATE CRIME. GETS ALL PASSIONATE ABOUT IT.
FOR PITY'S SAKE, PHARMA... THEY'RE NOT CARRYING ANYTHING AND THEY CAN'T TURN INTO ANYTHING...
ALRIGHT—YOU AND FIRST AID LOCK 'EM UP WHILE I PREPARE THE CIRCUIT SLABS. JUST A PATCH-UP JOB, THOUGH—ENOUGH TO SATISFY ARTICLE 7—AND THEN WE ASK HIGH COMMAND WHAT TO DO WITH THEM.
AND THAT WAS THE END OF THAT.
ALMOST.
PHARMA? YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS. THE MONOS ARE HURTING— THEY SAY THEY'VE GOT PROXIMITY PAINS.
YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO OPERATE. IF YOU CONJOIN THEM IT MIGHT SAVE THEIR LIVES...
IT TURNS OUT THEY SHARED A BRANCHED SPARK—A SORT OF OVERLAPPING NERVOUS SYSTEM. AND BECAUSE THEY WERE CLOSE TO FULL SYNTHESIS...

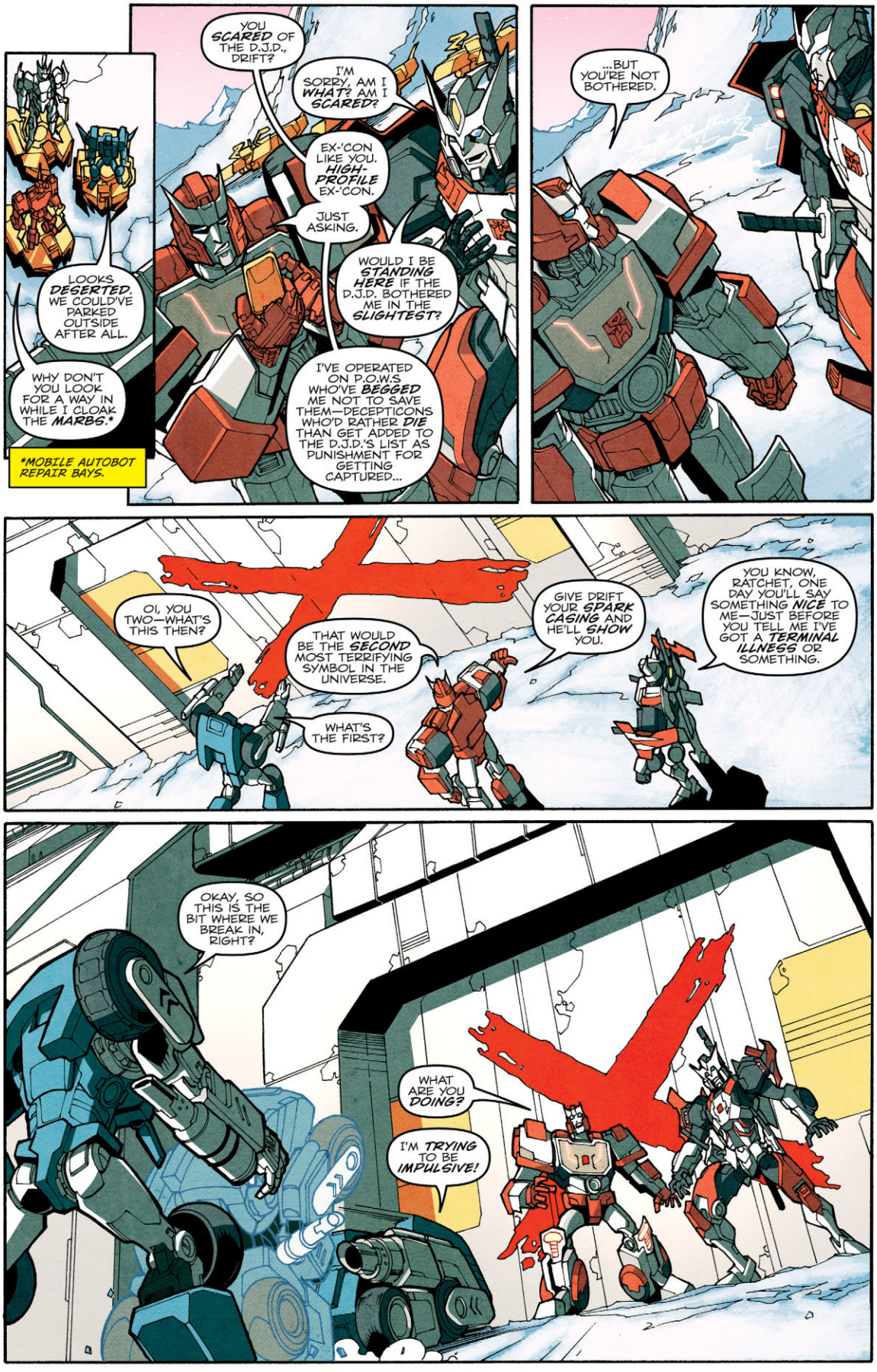

THEY WERE *GENERICONS*. FRONTLINE FODDER. YOU COULD TELL BY THE SIZE AND SHADE OF THEIR BADGES.
THEY'D BEEN ATTACKED BY THE D.J.D. AND WANTED SAFE HAVEN. WE WERE "OBLIGED" TO TAKE THEM IN. ARTICLE 7 OF THE AUTOBOT CODE, APPARENTLY.
AMBULON IMMEDIATELY TOOK PITY ON THEM...
PHARMA IMMEDIATELY *DIDN'T*.
PHARMA'S IN CHARGE. CONTROL FREAK. THINKS HE'S AN EXPERT ON EVERYTHING.
AMAZING DOCTOR, THOUGH. HE ONCE PERFORMED A FOUR-WAY FUEL PUMP TRANSPLANT—AND HE WAS ONE OF THE DONORS.
NOW, PHARMA'S GOT THIS THING ABOUT DECEPTICONS. HATES THEM. I MEAN SURE, WE ALL HATE THEM. BUT HE *HATES* THEM.
TRIPLE M = MILITANT MONOFORM MOVEMENT. A RELIGIOUS FACTION WHO REJECT ADAPTUS BY HAVING THEIR TRANSFORMATION COGS REMOVED.
THEY SHOWED AMBULON THEIR SCARS.
YEAH. TEXTBOOK EXTRACTION.
THE SCANNER AGREES WITH YOU. THE WHOLE *TRANSFORMATION COG* HAS BEEN *CUT OUT*.
THE ATMOSPHERE CHANGED. THESE DAYS EVERYONE SAYS THEY'RE RELAXED ABOUT THE WHOLE MONOFORMER THING, BUT THERE'S STILL A LOT OF ***SHAPISM*** OUT THERE—A LOT OF ***PREJUDICE***.
PHARMA NEVER GOT TO PERFORM THAT OPERATION. BECAUSE NOT LONG AFTER THAT PHONE CALL, PEOPLE STARTED CRYING.
FIRST AID! WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?!
I NEED YOU TO HELP ME HOLD THIS ONE DOWN!
CRYING THEMSELVES TO DEATH.
I HOPE TO WRITE MORE LATER, BUT IF NOT—IF THESE ARE MY LAST WORDS—I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT WE TRIED OUR BEST. WE DID.
IT JUST WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH.


LIFE AFTER THE BIG BANG
THE LOST LIGHT. TWO DAYS LATER.
TAKE A SEAT, DOC.
WHAT CAN I GET YOU?
YOU'VE... OPENED A BAR.
I KNOW. ISN'T IT THE COOLEST THING YOU'VE EVER SEEN?
DOES RODIMUS KNOW? DOES MAGNUS?
NOT YET, BUT—IT'S FINE. I'LL INVITE THEM TO THE OFFICIAL OPENING.
IT'S FINE.
ON THE HOUSE.
TO CELEBRATE FINDING OURSELVES ON THE MAP.
EITHER IT'S VERY FAR AWAY, OR YOU'VE INVENTED THE WORLD'S SMALLEST DRINK.
IT'S FREE. SHUT UP.
NOW, YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME ABOUT FISITRON'S DATALOGS...
YOU WERE A SUBSCRIBER, RIGHT? LIKE ME. YOU HAD WRECKERS: DECLASSIFIED BEAMED DIRECTLY INTO YOUR BRAIN.
...YEP. 'TIL FISITRON DIED. IRONFIST. WHATEVER.*
*SEE LAST STAND OF THE WRECKERS.
WHICH MEANS YOU—
GOT IT!
—RECEIVED IT, TOO—LAST NIGHT—A NEW DATALOG.

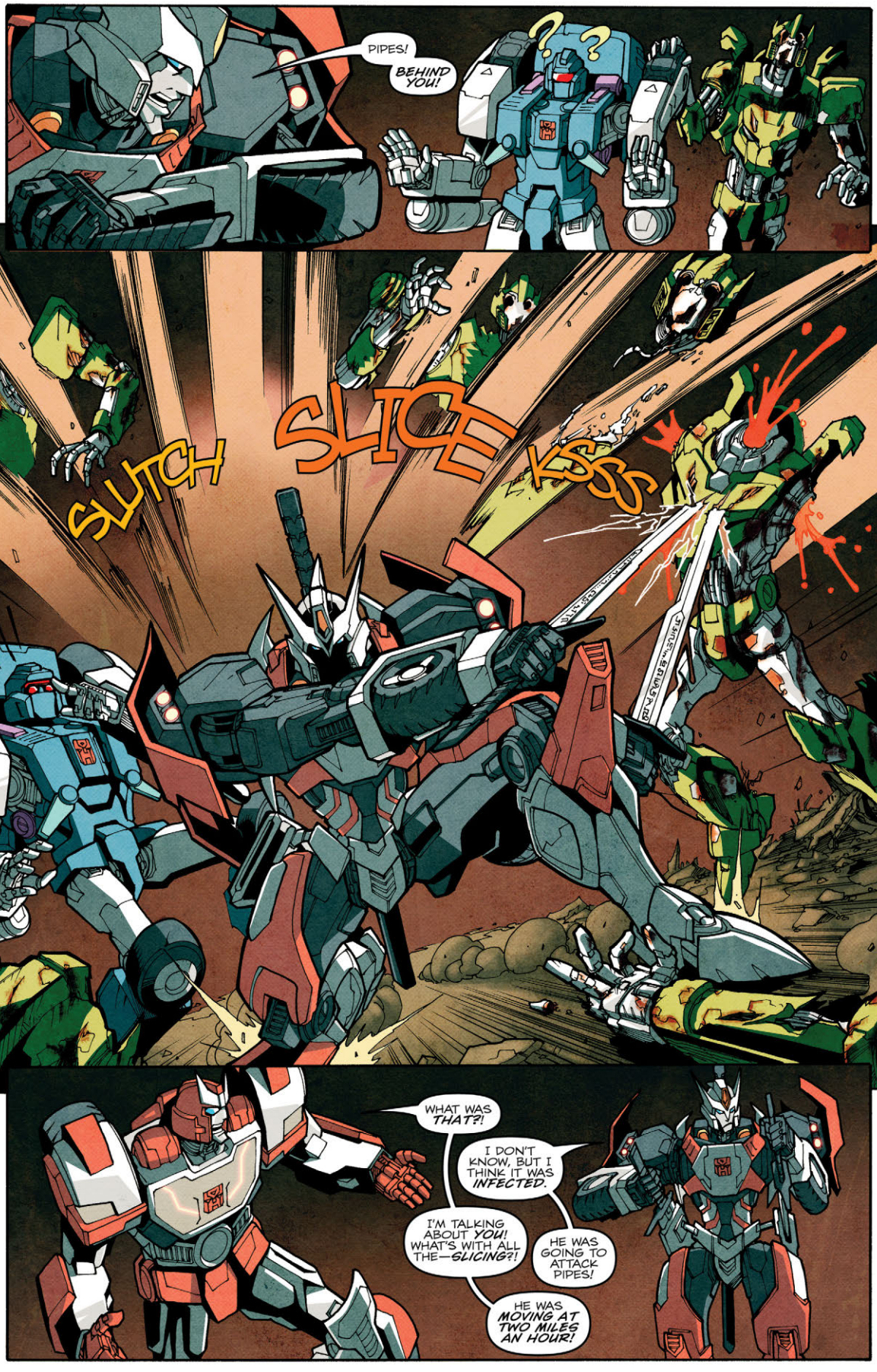

YEAH, I KIND OF IGNORED IT. I WAS TOO BUSY MAKING RED ALERT FREAK OUT.
IT WAS BRILLIANT—WHILE HE WAS RECHARGING, I REARRANGED ALL THE FURNITURE IN OUR HABITATION SUITE, THEN WHEN HE WOKE UP I PRETENDED NOTHING HAD CHANGED.
WHILE HE'S OFFLINE TONIGHT I'M GONNA WHEEL HIM INTO A DIFFERENT ROOM.
YEAH, YEAH, THE DATALOG. IT WASN'T A PROPER DATALOG, WAS IT? JUST A BUNCH OF RANDOM NUMBERS.
SWERVE—
SWERVE—
DAMMIT!
KISH
SORRY—MY HANDS KEEP FREEZING UP. I'VE WORN THEM OUT.
GET BRAINSTORM TO MAKE YOU SOME NEW ONES.
ACTUALLY, DON'T. HE'D PROBABLY GIVE YOU AN INDEX FINGER THAT FIRED SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES, OR—OR A THERMONUCLEAR THUMB.
THESE HANDS ARE IRREPLACEABLE. AND WHEN THEY STOP WORKING, THAT'S IT—I OFFICIALLY CEASE TO BE OF ANY USE.
SO, ER, LAST NIGHT'S DATALOG...
OKAY, SO THE "RANDOM NUMBERS" WERE ACTUALLY STATISTICS—MEDICAL STATS. SURVIVAL RATES, TO BE PRECISE.
I DON'T KNOW WHO SENT THE DATALOG, OR WHEN—THESE THINGS TAKE TIME TO TRAVEL THROUGH SUBSPACE—BUT I KNOW IT CAME FROM DELPHI. I RECOGNIZE THE DIAGNOSIS CODES.
THE STATISTICS START TWO YEARS AGO, AND AT FIRST THEY FLUCTUATE: BETWEEN 0% AND 20% OF PATIENTS ARE DYING EVERY MONTH. TRAGIC, BUT WITHIN NORMAL PARAMETERS.
BUT THEN THE DEATH RATE STARTS TO CLIMB, AND PLATEAU, AND CLIMB, AND PLATEAU.
AND FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS, PRECISELY HALF OF ALL PATIENTS HAVE DIED EVERY MONTH.
SWERVE, WHOEVER SENT THAT DATALOG IS TRYING TO TELL US SOMETHING.
I KNOW—AND I THINK IT'S TIME I MADE A HOUSE CALL.
WE'RE NOT FAR FROM DELPHI, YOU KNOW...

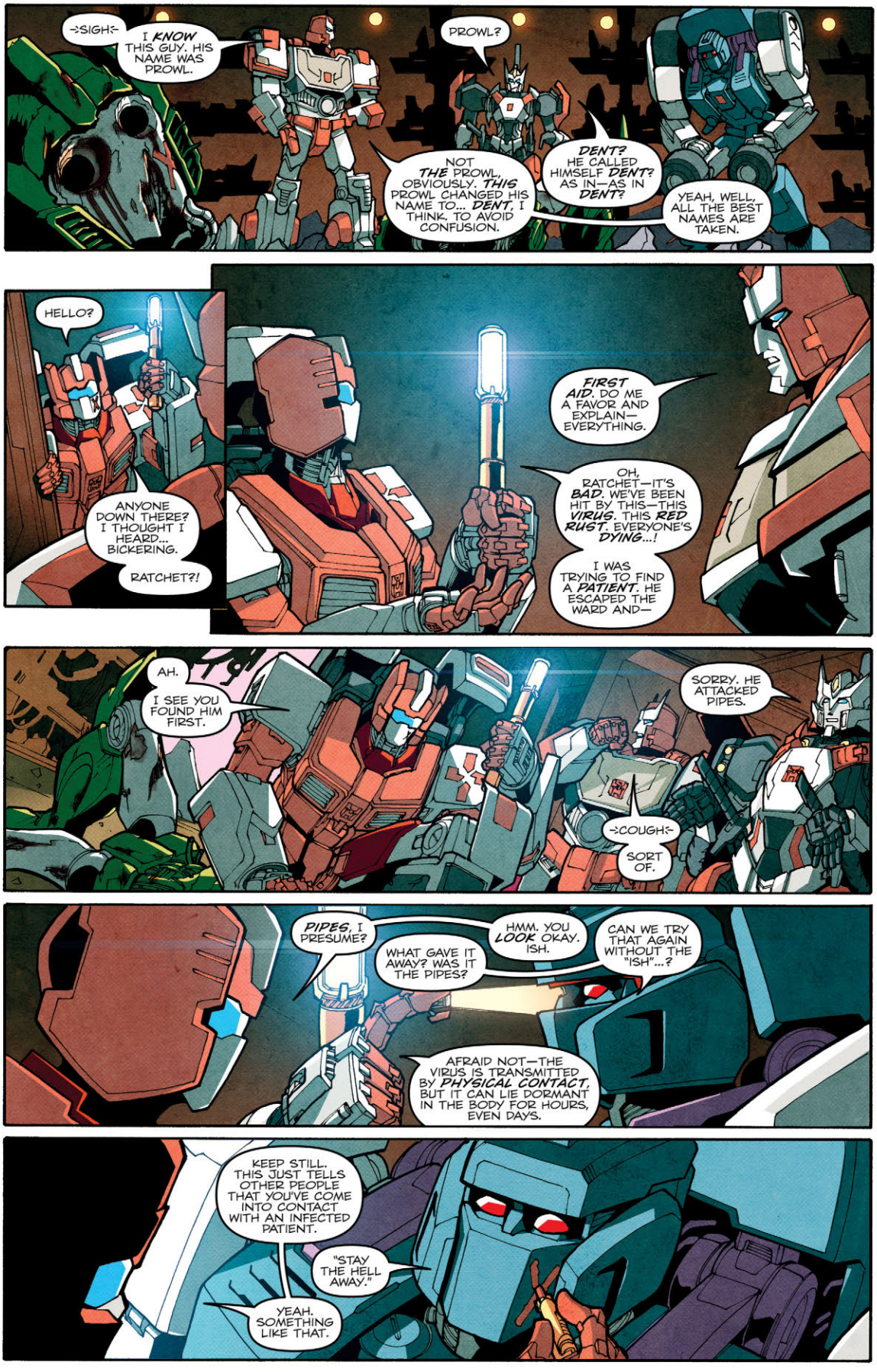

RODIMUS' QUARTERS.
WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT TAILGATE.
TAILGATE.
RIGHT.
OF COURSE.
WHICH ONE'S TAILGATE...?
THE WHITE ONE. ABOUT THIS HIGH. SQUARE HEAD. BLUE OPTICS.
SPENT SIX MILLION YEARS TRAPPED UNDERGROUND, OBLIVIOUS TO THE PASSAGE OF TIME.
OH! THAT TAILGATE.
HE WANTS TO BECOME A DECEPTICON.
WELL HE CAN'T, CAN HE? NOT WITHOUT MEGATRON OR ONE OF THE CONCLAVE PRESIDING OVER THE AFFILIATION CEREMONY. WHICH, BY THE WAY, IS A LOT MORE INVASIVE THAN OURS.
SERIOUSLY—DRIFT SAYS THEY RIP OUT A PORTION OF YOUR SPARK CASING AND TURN IT INTO A DECEPTICON BADGE.
YOU'RE MISSING MY POINT—TAILGATE HAS IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A DECEPTICON SYMPATHIZER.
SO... WHAT? WE TELL HIM OFF? WE SEND HIM HOME? I SUPPOSE YOU WANT TO ARREST HIM...
ARE YOU ALRIGHT, MAGNUS? YOU SEEM A BIT—
DON'T SAY I'M IRRITABLE. IT REALLY—IT REALLY IRRITATES ME.
LOOK, IT'S MY JOB TO MAINTAIN ORDER ON THIS SHIP, AND THAT'S NOT EASY WHEN PEOPLE LIKE TAILGATE START ACTING UNPREDICTABLY. NOW THAT THE WAR'S OVER, EVERYONE SEEMS A LOT MORE... INDIVIDUAL. I DON'T LIKE IT.
HEY, WE ALL WANT TO FIND THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON...
DO WE? JACKPOT'S ONLY HERE BECAUSE HE LOST A BET. WHIRL'S HERE BY ACCIDENT. AND SKIDS IS—WELL, WHO KNOWS WHAT'S GOING ON WITH SKIDS.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHY ARE YOU HERE?
I'M NOT SURE ANYMORE.
I'M STARTING TO THINK I SHOULD'VE STAYED BEHIND.
MY ADVICE? EASE UP A BIT. YOU CAN BE TOO RIGID IN YOUR OUTLOOK—A LITTLE FLEX IS GOOD SOMETIMES. BETTER TO BEND THAN SNAP.
WHAT ABOUT TAILGATE?
HEY—YOU LEAVE TAILGATE TO ME.

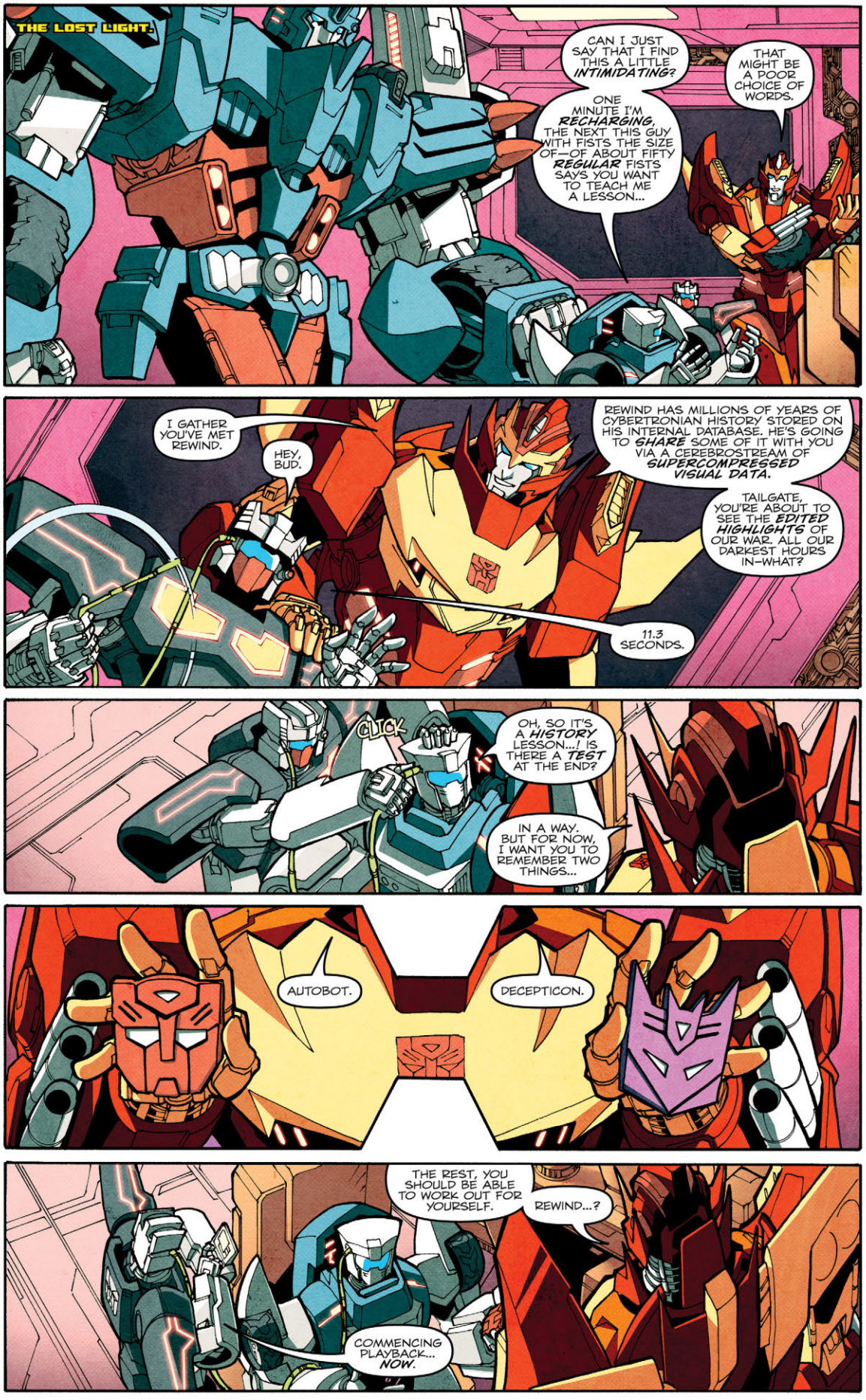

THE PLANET MESSATINE.
FIVE MILES FROM DELPHI.
AND WE CAN'T JUST PARK OUTSIDE BECAUSE...?
BECAUSE, *PIPES*, WE'RE *PLAYING IT SAFE*. THIS WHOLE SETUP FEELS—I DON'T KNOW. I CAN'T PUT MY FINGER ON IT.
IT'S CALLED *INTUITION*, AND IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF. YOU SHOULD SURRENDER TO IMPULSE MORE OFTEN.
DRIFT—TRUST ME—YOU DON'T WANT ME TO DO THAT.
OKAY, GUESS WHAT.
ANYONE...? NO? NO GUESSES?
ALRIGHT, I'LL TELL YOU: THIS IS MY FIRST PROPER ALIEN PLANET.
IT'S *TRUE*! I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE ON CYBERTRON OR ON SPACE STATIONS. THAT'S WHY I JOINED THE *LOST LIGHT*: SO ME AND THE UNIVERSE COULD GET *UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL*.
AND WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THE UNIVERSE SO FAR?
WET.
WET AND KINDA BRILLIANT.
HEY, THIS IS THE *D.J.D.'S* STOMPING GROUND, ISN'T IT?
SWERVE SAW THEM IN ACTION ONCE. HE WAS SO *TRAUMATIZED* HE COULDN'T SPEAK FOR SIX MONTHS. SAID IT WAS THE WORST THING THAT HAD EVER HAPPENED TO HIM.
WHAT, SEEING THE D.J.D?
NO, NOT BEING ABLE TO SPEAK.
RATCHET, THIS WHOLE DELPHI WHISTLEBLOWER THING... WHAT IF EVERYTHING TURNS OUT TO BE OKAY? BORING AND OKAY?
THEN I GET TO DO SOMETHING *NICE* FOR A CHANGE AND MAKE *PHARMA* THE NEW *CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER*.
WHY PHARMA?
YOU WOULDN'T ASK ME THAT IF YOU'D SEEN HIM AT WORK. SEE, GOOD MEDICS—IT'S ALL IN THE HANDS. THERE'S A CERTAIN... FLUIDITY OF MOVEMENT. YOU CAN'T *BUILD* HANDS LIKE THAT.
ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT ALL THE BEST MEDICS WERE *FORGED*?
YES. AND *NO*, I *DON'T* THINK IT PROVES THE EXISTENCE OF ADAPTUS.

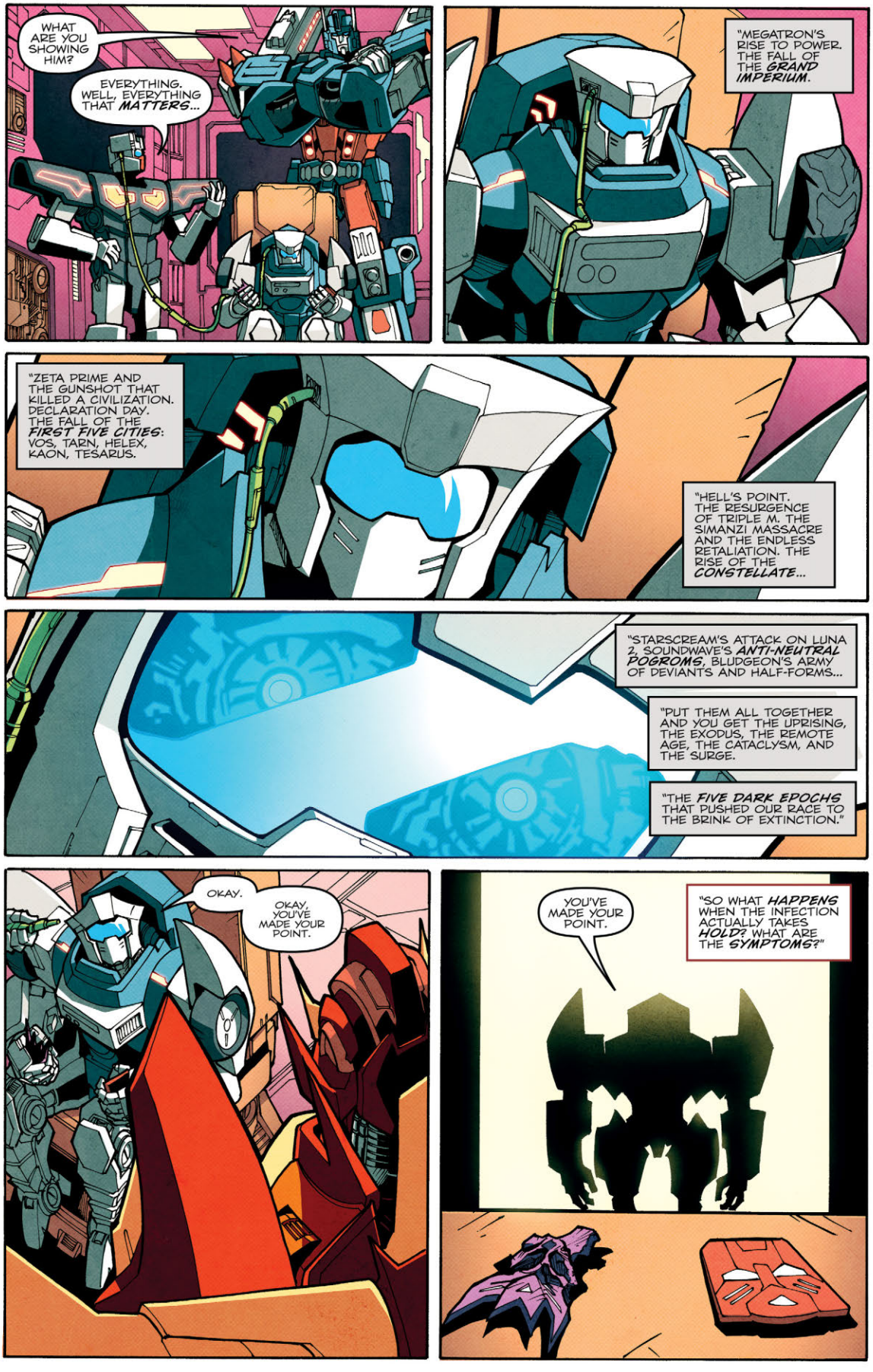

YOU SCARED OF THE D.J.D., DRIFT?
I'M SORRY, AM I WHAT? AM I SCARED?
EX-'CON LIKE YOU. HIGH-PROFILE EX-'CON.
JUST ASKING.
WOULD I BE STANDING HERE IF THE D.J.D. BOTHERED ME IN THE SLIGHTEST?
I'VE OPERATED ON P.O.W.S WHO'VE BEGGED ME NOT TO SAVE THEM—DECEPTICONS WHO'D RATHER DIE THAN GET ADDED TO THE D.J.D.'S LIST AS PUNISHMENT FOR GETTING CAPTURED...
LOOKS DESERTED. WE COULD'VE PARKED OUTSIDE AFTER ALL.
WHY DON'T YOU LOOK FOR A WAY IN WHILE I CLOAK THE MARBS.*
*MOBILE AUTOBOT REPAIR BAYS.
...BUT YOU'RE NOT BOTHERED.
OI, YOU TWO—WHAT'S THIS THEN?
THAT WOULD BE THE SECOND MOST TERRIFYING SYMBOL IN THE UNIVERSE.
WHAT'S THE FIRST?
GIVE DRIFT YOUR SPARK CASING AND HE'LL SHOW YOU.
YOU KNOW, RATCHET, ONE DAY YOU'LL SAY SOMETHING NICE TO ME—JUST BEFORE YOU TELL ME I'VE GOT A TERMINAL ILLNESS OR SOMETHING.
OKAY, SO THIS IS THE BIT WHERE WE BREAK IN, RIGHT?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M TRYING TO BE IMPULSIVE!

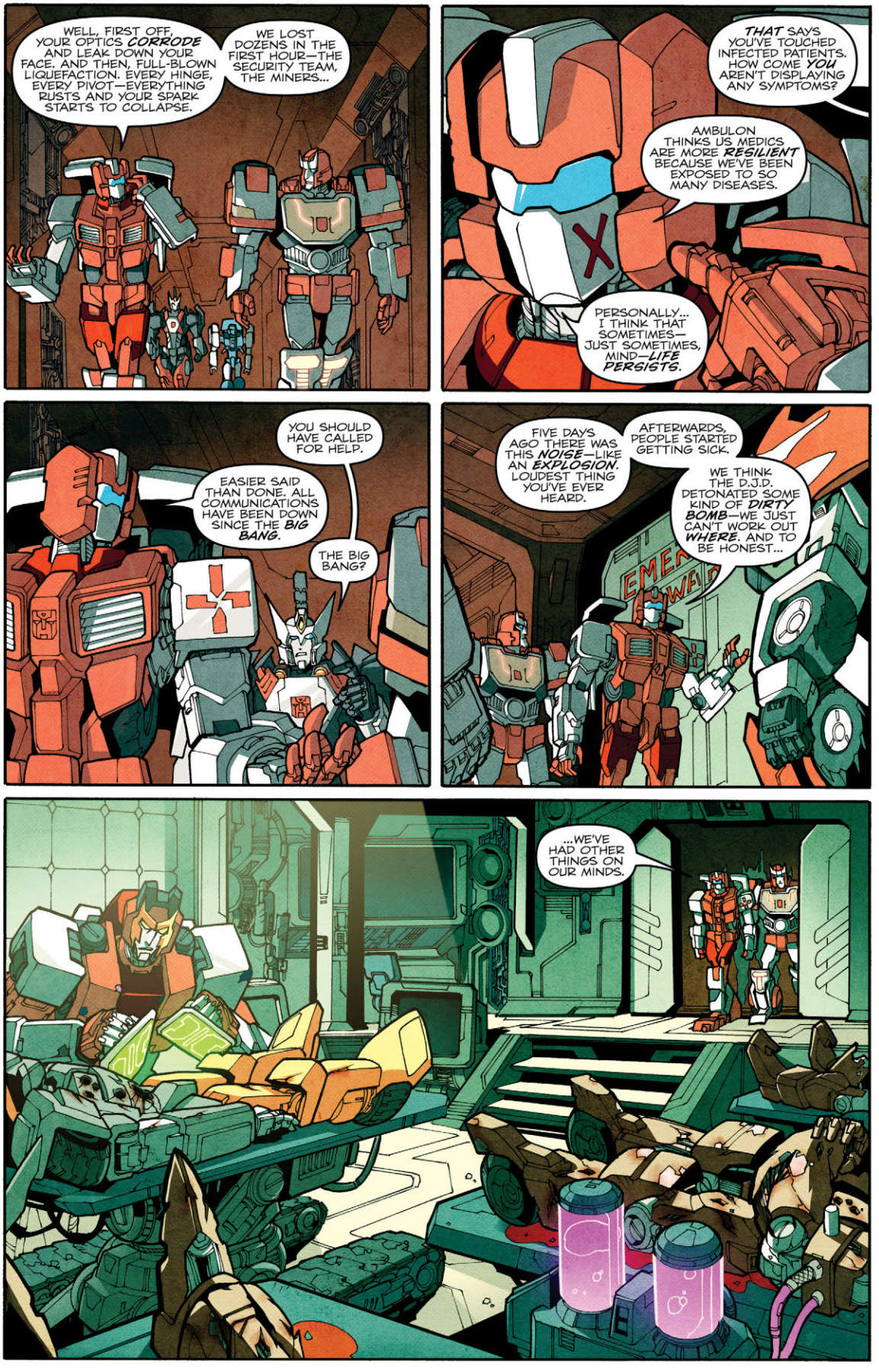
WRUNCH
UH, GUYS...?
I'M COVERED IN—
—OH PRIMUS. I THINK I'M COVERED IN DEAD PEOPLE.
THAT CROSS ON THE WALL? THE ONE YOU JUST IGNORED? IT'S THE UNIVERSAL PLAGUE SYMBOL. IT MEANS "STAY THE HELL AWAY" IN A BILLION LANGUAGES.
IT DOES NOT MEAN "RAM-RAID A MORGUE"!
HANDS UP WHO THINKS THIS TRIP'S JUST TAKEN A SLIGHT TURN FOR THE WORSE.
A PLAGUE SYMBOL? AM I INFECTED OR SOMETHING?
I DON'T KNOW.
PROBABLY NOT.
HOPEFULLY NOT.
WHAT ABOUT "DEFINITELY NOT"? IS "DEFINITELY NOT" IN THERE? 'COS THAT'S MY FAVORITE.

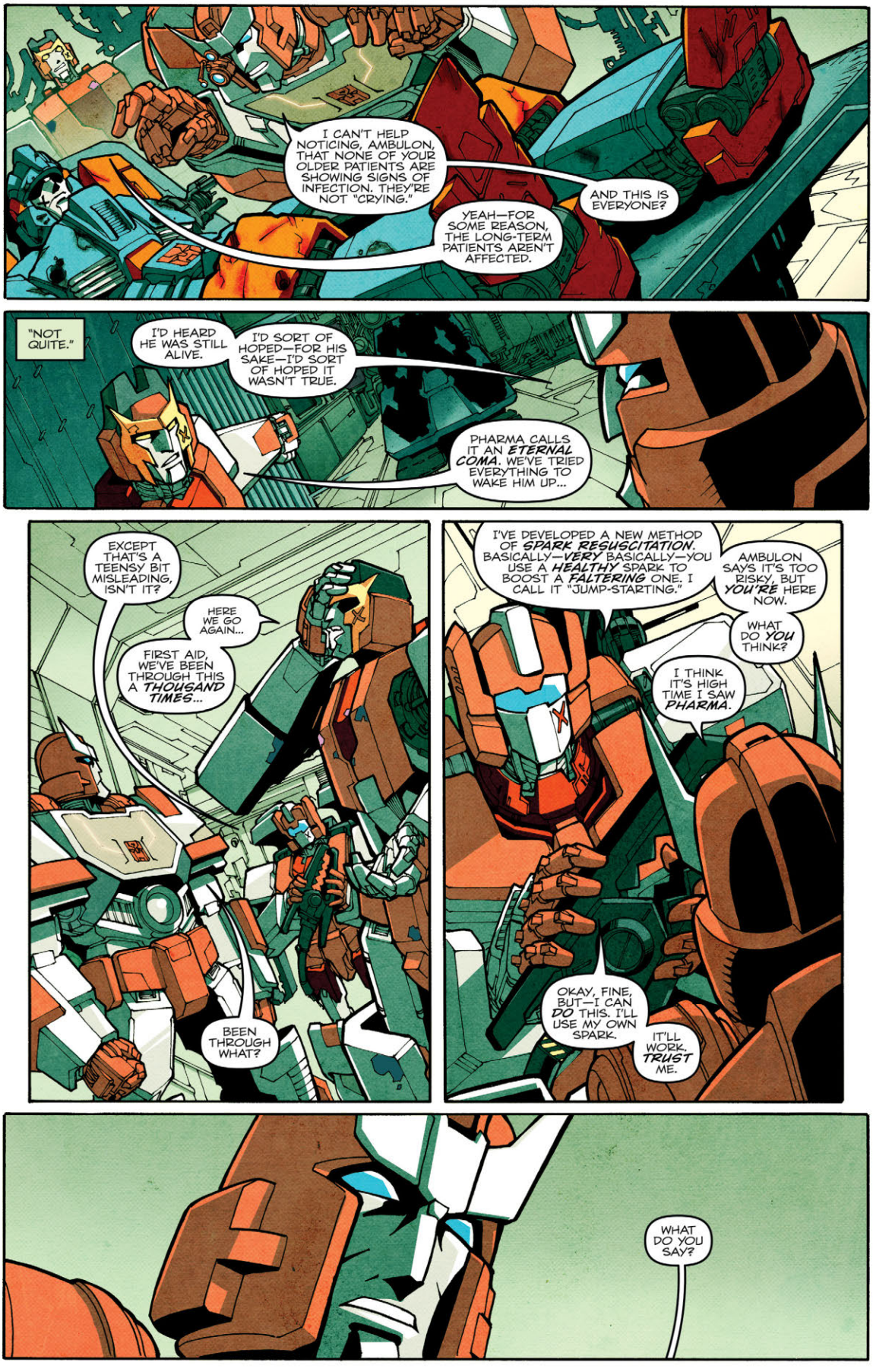

PIPES!
BEHIND YOU!
SLUTCH
SLICE
KSSS
WHAT WAS THAT?!
I DON'T KNOW, BUT I THINK IT WAS INFECTED.
I'M TALKING ABOUT YOU! WHAT'S WITH ALL THE—SLICING?!
HE WAS GOING TO ATTACK PIPES!
HE WAS MOVING AT TWO MILES AN HOUR!

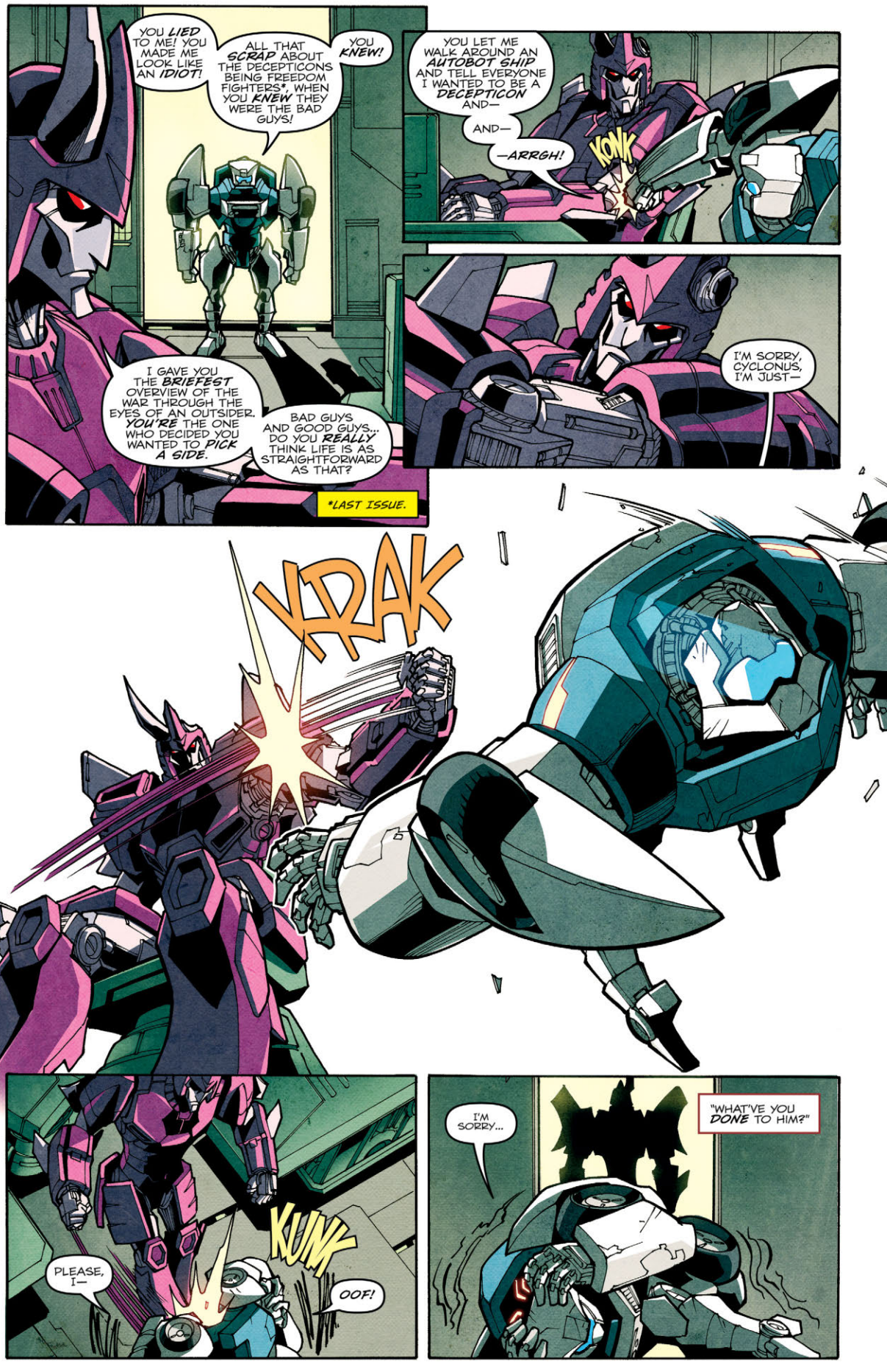

-SIGH-
I KNOW THIS GUY. HIS NAME WAS PROWL.
PROWL?
NOT THE PROWL, OBVIOUSLY. THIS PROWL CHANGED HIS NAME TO... DENT, I THINK. TO AVOID CONFUSION.
DENT? HE CALLED HIMSELF DENT? AS IN—AS IN DENT?
YEAH, WELL, ALL THE BEST NAMES ARE TAKEN.
HELLO?
ANYONE DOWN THERE? I THOUGHT I HEARD... BICKERING.
RATCHET?!
FIRST AID. DO ME A FAVOR AND EXPLAIN—EVERYTHING.
OH, RATCHET—IT'S BAD. WE'VE BEEN HIT BY THIS—THIS VIRUS. THIS RED RUST. EVERYONE'S DYING...!
I WAS TRYING TO FIND A PATIENT. HE ESCAPED THE WARD AND—
AH.
I SEE YOU FOUND HIM FIRST.
SORRY. HE ATTACKED PIPES.
-COUGH-
SORT OF.
PIPES, I PRESUME?
WHAT GAVE IT AWAY? WAS IT THE PIPES?
HMM. YOU LOOK OKAY. ISH.
CAN WE TRY THAT AGAIN WITHOUT THE "ISH"...?
AFRAID NOT—THE VIRUS IS TRANSMITTED BY PHYSICAL CONTACT, BUT IT CAN LIE DORMANT IN THE BODY FOR HOURS, EVEN DAYS.
KEEP STILL. THIS JUST TELLS OTHER PEOPLE THAT YOU'VE COME INTO CONTACT WITH AN INFECTED PATIENT.
"STAY THE HELL AWAY."
YEAH. SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

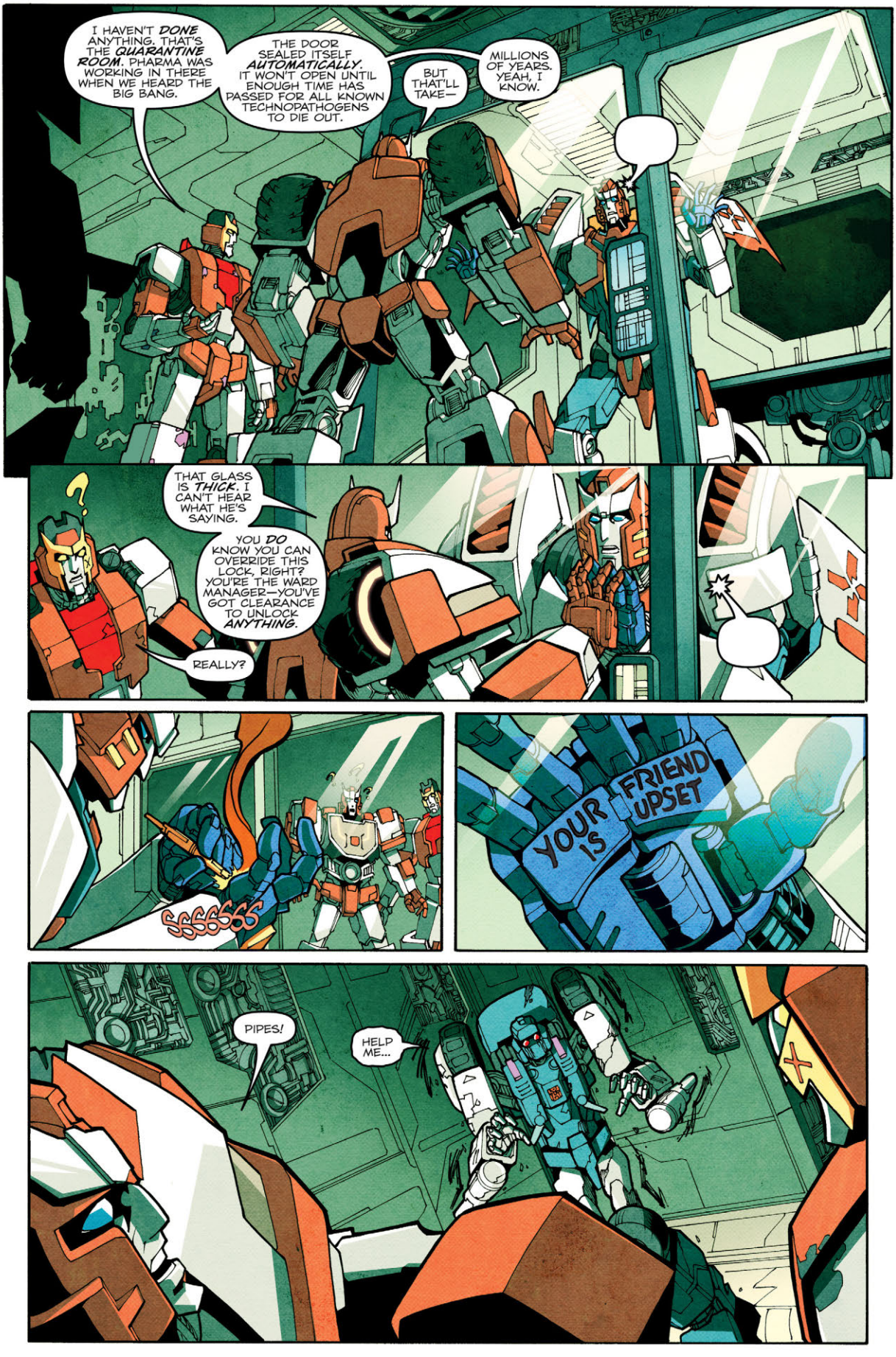

THE LOST LIGHT.
CAN I JUST SAY THAT I FIND THIS A LITTLE *INTIMIDATING*?
ONE MINUTE I'M *RECHARGING*, THE NEXT THIS GUY WITH FISTS THE SIZE OF—OF ABOUT FIFTY *REGULAR* FISTS SAYS YOU WANT TO TEACH ME A LESSON...
THAT MIGHT BE A POOR CHOICE OF WORDS.
I GATHER YOU'VE MET REWIND.
HEY, BUD.
REWIND HAS MILLIONS OF YEARS OF CYBERTRONIAN HISTORY STORED ON HIS INTERNAL DATABASE. HE'S GOING TO *SHARE* SOME OF IT WITH YOU VIA A CEREBROSTREAM OF *SUPERCOMPRESSED VISUAL DATA*.
TAILGATE, YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE THE *EDITED HIGHLIGHTS* OF OUR WAR. ALL OUR DARKEST HOURS IN—WHAT?
11.3 SECONDS.
CLICK
OH, SO IT'S A *HISTORY* LESSON...! IS THERE A *TEST* AT THE END?
IN A WAY. BUT FOR NOW, I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER TWO THINGS...
AUTOBOT.
DECEPTICON.
THE REST, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO WORK OUT FOR YOURSELF.
REWIND...?
COMMENCING PLAYBACK... *NOW*.

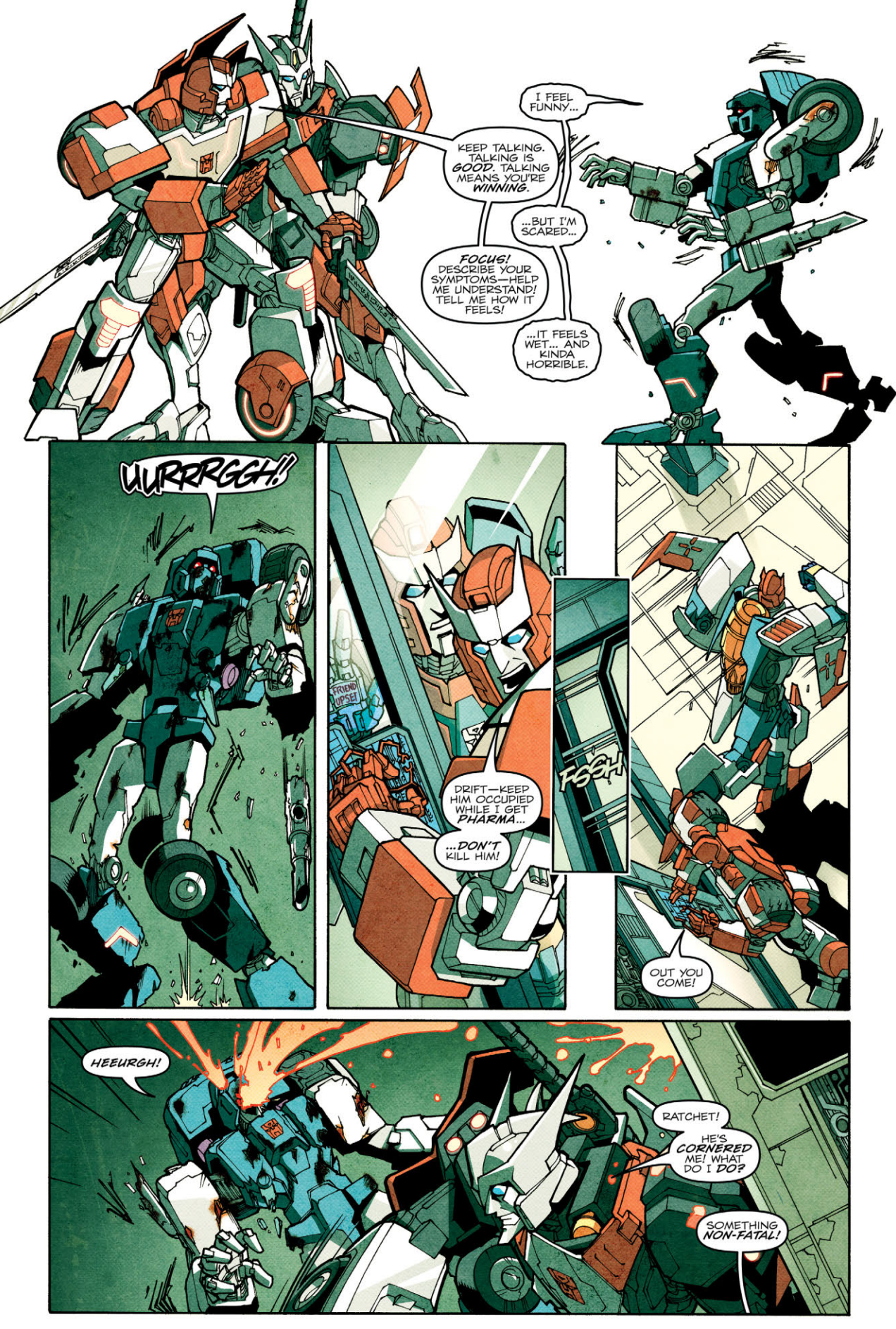

WHAT ARE YOU SHOWING HIM?
EVERYTHING. WELL, EVERYTHING THAT *MATTERS*...
"MEGATRON'S RISE TO POWER. THE FALL OF THE *GRAND IMPERIUM*.
"ZETA PRIME AND THE GUNSHOT THAT KILLED A CIVILIZATION. DECLARATION DAY. THE FALL OF THE *FIRST FIVE CITIES*: VOS, TARN, HELEX, KAON, TESARUS.
"HELL'S POINT. THE RESURGENCE OF TRIPLE M. THE SIMANZI MASSACRE AND THE ENDLESS RETALIATION. THE RISE OF THE *CONSTELLATE*...
"STARSCREAM'S ATTACK ON LUNA 2, SOUNDWAVE'S *ANTI-NEUTRAL POGROMS*, BLUDGEON'S ARMY OF DEVIANTS AND HALF-FORMS...
"PUT THEM ALL TOGETHER AND YOU GET THE UPRISING, THE EXODUS, THE REMOTE AGE, THE CATACLYSM, AND THE SURGE.
"THE *FIVE DARK EPOCHS* THAT PUSHED OUR RACE TO THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION."
OKAY.
OKAY, YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT.
YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT.
"SO WHAT *HAPPENS* WHEN THE INFECTION ACTUALLY TAKES *HOLD*? WHAT ARE THE *SYMPTOMS*?"

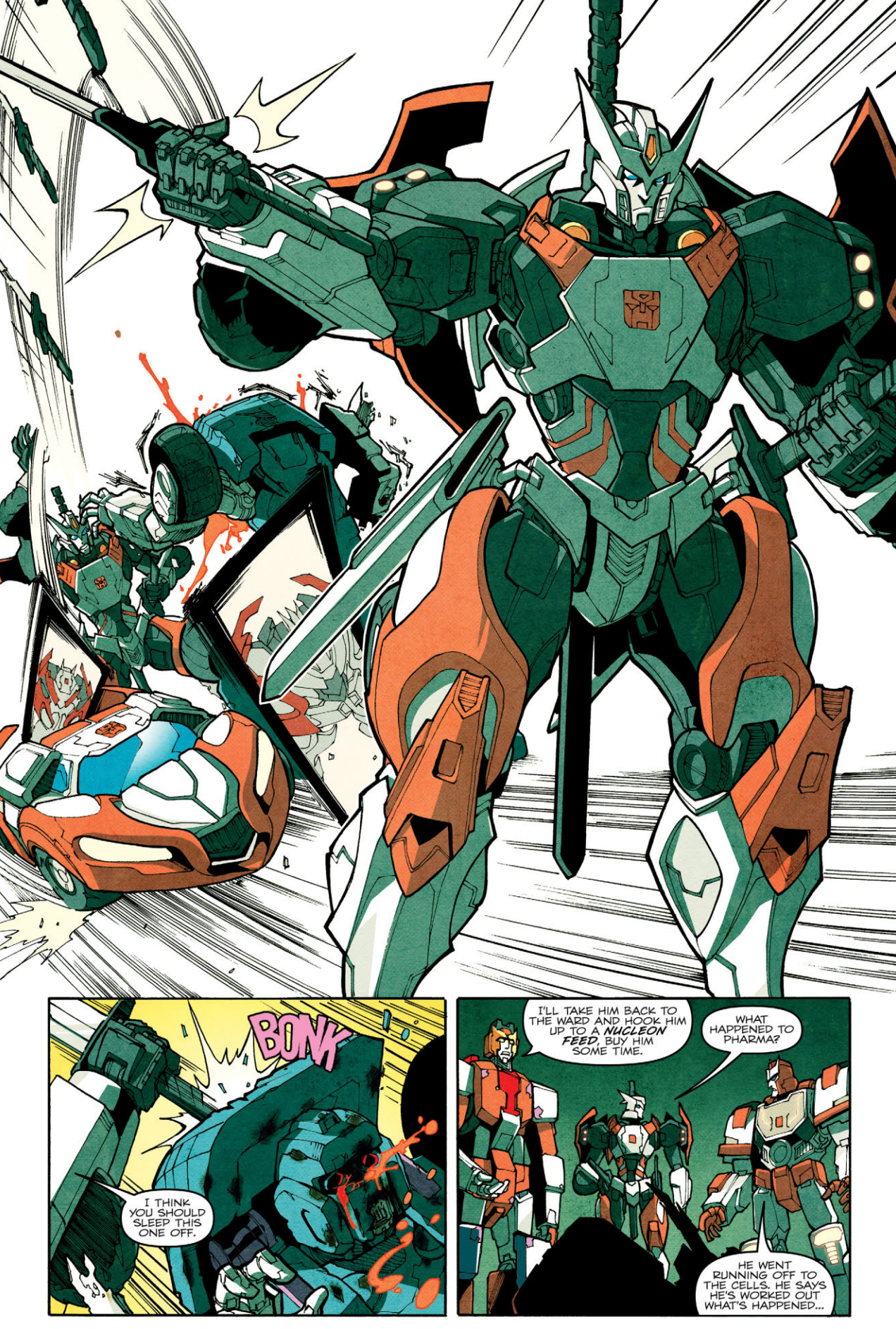

WELL, FIRST OFF, YOUR OPTICS *CORRODE* AND LEAK DOWN YOUR FACE. AND THEN, FULL-BLOWN LIQUEFACTION. EVERY HINGE, EVERY PIVOT—EVERYTHING RUSTS AND YOUR SPARK STARTS TO COLLAPSE.
WE LOST DOZENS IN THE FIRST HOUR—THE SECURITY TEAM, THE MINERS...
THAT SAYS YOU'VE TOUCHED INFECTED PATIENTS. HOW COME *YOU* AREN'T DISPLAYING ANY SYMPTOMS?
AMBULON THINKS US MEDICS ARE MORE *RESILIENT* BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN EXPOSED TO SO MANY DISEASES.
PERSONALLY... I THINK THAT SOMETIMES—JUST SOMETIMES, MIND—*LIFE PERSISTS.*
YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED FOR HELP.
EASIER SAID THAN DONE. ALL COMMUNICATIONS HAVE BEEN DOWN SINCE THE *BIG BANG.*
THE BIG BANG?
FIVE DAYS AGO THERE WAS THIS *NOISE*—LIKE AN *EXPLOSION.* LOUDEST THING YOU'VE EVER HEARD.
AFTERWARDS, PEOPLE STARTED GETTING SICK.
WE THINK THE D.J.D. DETONATED SOME KIND OF *DIRTY BOMB*—WE JUST CAN'T WORK OUT *WHERE.* AND TO BE HONEST...
...WE'VE HAD OTHER THINGS ON OUR MINDS.

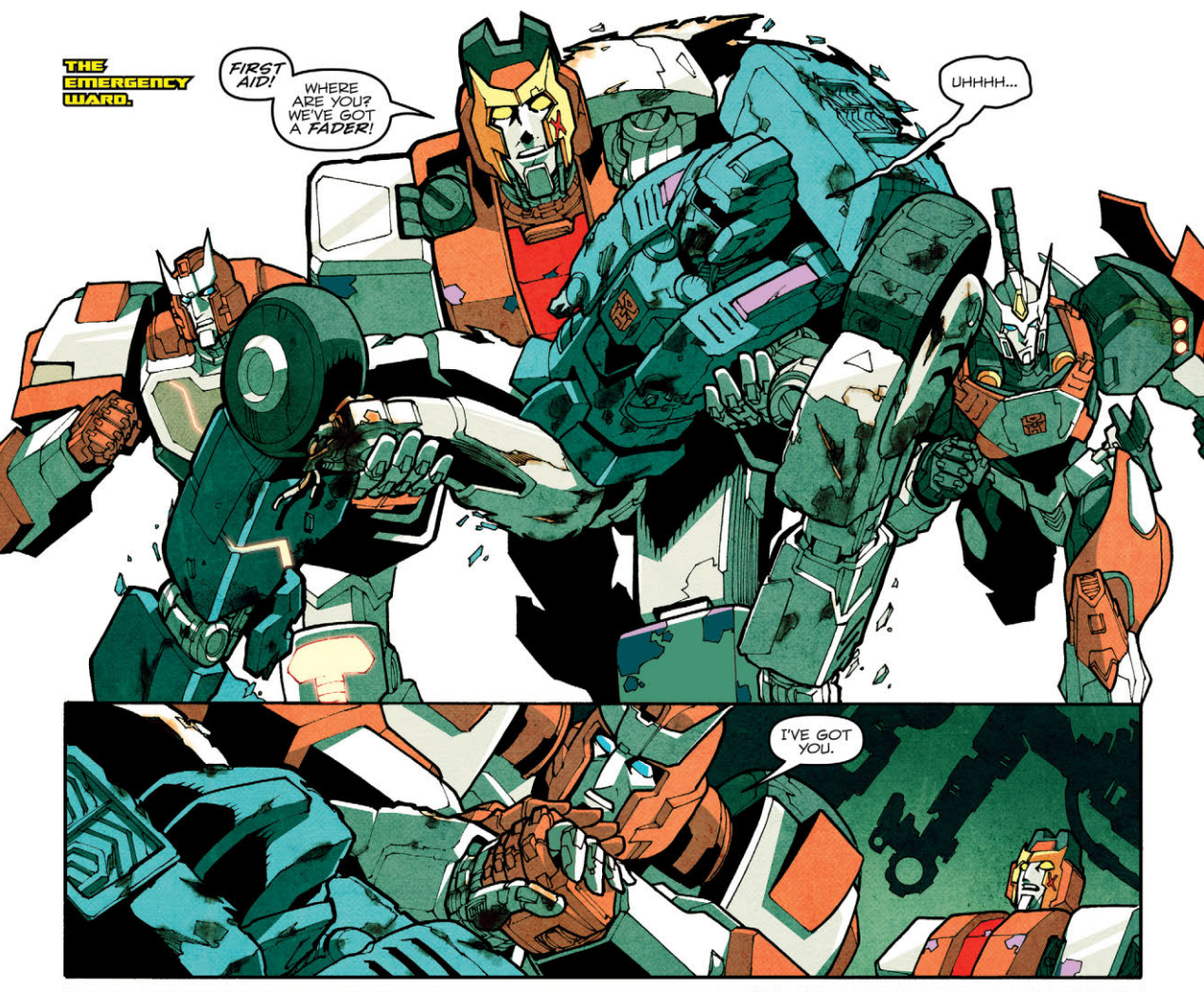

I CAN'T HELP NOTICING, AMBULON, THAT NONE OF YOUR OLDER PATIENTS ARE SHOWING SIGNS OF INFECTION. THEY'RE NOT "CRYING."
AND THIS IS EVERYONE?
YEAH—FOR SOME REASON, THE LONG-TERM PATIENTS AREN'T AFFECTED.
"NOT QUITE."
I'D HEARD HE WAS STILL ALIVE.
I'D SORT OF HOPED—FOR HIS SAKE—I'D SORT OF HOPED IT WASN'T TRUE.
PHARMA CALLS IT AN ETERNAL COMA. WE'VE TRIED EVERYTHING TO WAKE HIM UP...
EXCEPT THAT'S A TEENSY BIT MISLEADING, ISN'T IT?
HERE WE GO AGAIN...
FIRST AID, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS A THOUSAND TIMES...
BEEN THROUGH WHAT?
I'VE DEVELOPED A NEW METHOD OF SPARK RESUSCITATION. BASICALLY—VERY BASICALLY—YOU USE A HEALTHY SPARK TO BOOST A FALTERING ONE. I CALL IT "JUMP-STARTING."
AMBULON SAYS IT'S TOO RISKY, BUT YOU'RE HERE NOW.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I THINK IT'S HIGH TIME I SAW PHARMA.
OKAY, FINE, BUT—I CAN DO THIS. I'LL USE MY OWN SPARK.
IT'LL WORK. TRUST ME.
WHAT DO YOU SAY?

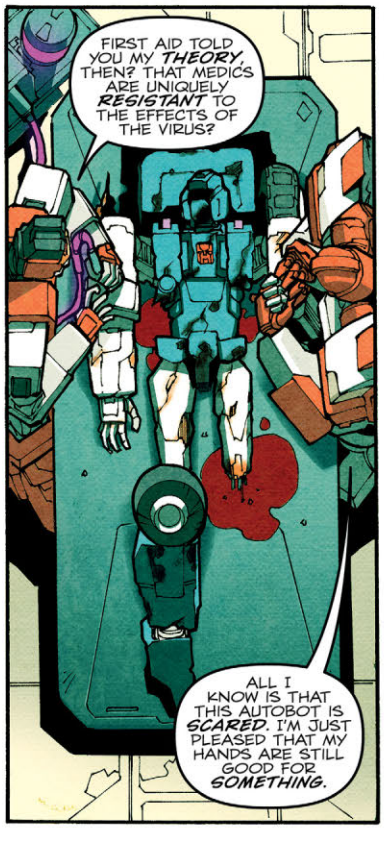

YOU LIED TO ME! YOU MADE ME LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT!
ALL THAT SCRAP ABOUT THE DECEPTICONS BEING FREEDOM FIGHTERS*, WHEN YOU KNEW THEY WERE THE BAD GUYS!
YOU KNEW!
I GAVE YOU THE BRIEFEST OVERVIEW OF THE WAR THROUGH THE EYES OF AN OUTSIDER. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DECIDED YOU WANTED TO PICK A SIDE.
BAD GUYS AND GOOD GUYS... DO YOU REALLY THINK LIFE IS AS STRAIGHTFORWARD AS THAT?
*LAST ISSUE.
YOU LET ME WALK AROUND AN AUTOBOT SHIP AND TELL EVERYONE I WANTED TO BE A DECEPTICON AND—
AND—
—ARRGH!
KONK
I'M SORRY, CYCLONUS, I'M JUST—
KRAK
PLEASE, I—
KUNK
OOF!
I'M SORRY...
"WHAT'VE YOU DONE TO HIM?"


I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING. THAT'S THE QUARANTINE ROOM. PHARMA WAS WORKING IN THERE WHEN WE HEARD THE BIG BANG.
THE DOOR SEALED ITSELF AUTOMATICALLY. IT WON'T OPEN UNTIL ENOUGH TIME HAS PASSED FOR ALL KNOWN TECHNOPATHOGENS TO DIE OUT.
BUT THAT'LL TAKE—
MILLIONS OF YEARS. YEAH, I KNOW.
THAT GLASS IS THICK. I CAN'T HEAR WHAT HE'S SAYING.
YOU DO KNOW YOU CAN OVERRIDE THIS LOCK, RIGHT? YOU'RE THE WARD MANAGER—YOU'VE GOT CLEARANCE TO UNLOCK ANYTHING.
REALLY?
SSSSSS
YOUR FRIEND IS UPSET
PIPES!
HELP ME...

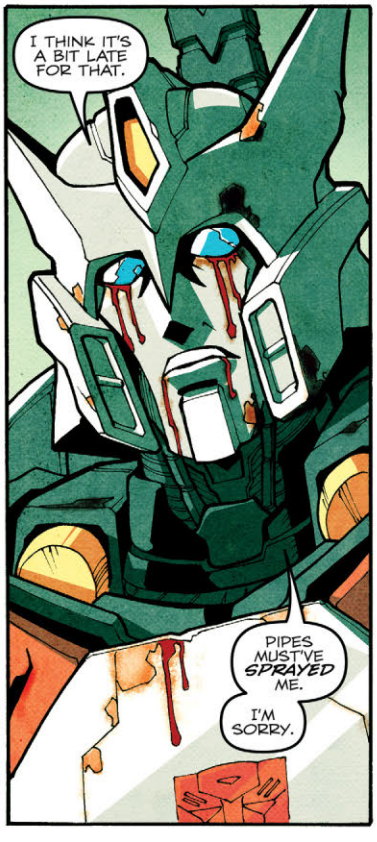

KEEP TALKING. TALKING IS GOOD. TALKING MEANS YOU'RE WINNING.
I FEEL FUNNY...
...BUT I'M SCARED...
FOCUS! DESCRIBE YOUR SYMPTOMS—HELP ME UNDERSTAND! TELL ME HOW IT FEELS!
...IT FEELS WET... AND KINDA HORRIBLE.
URRRGGH!
FRIEND UPSET
DRIFT—KEEP HIM OCCUPIED WHILE I GET PHARMA...
...DON'T KILL HIM!
FSSH
OUT YOU COME!
HEEURGH!
RATCHET!
HE'S CORNERED ME! WHAT DO I DO?
SOMETHING NON-FATAL!

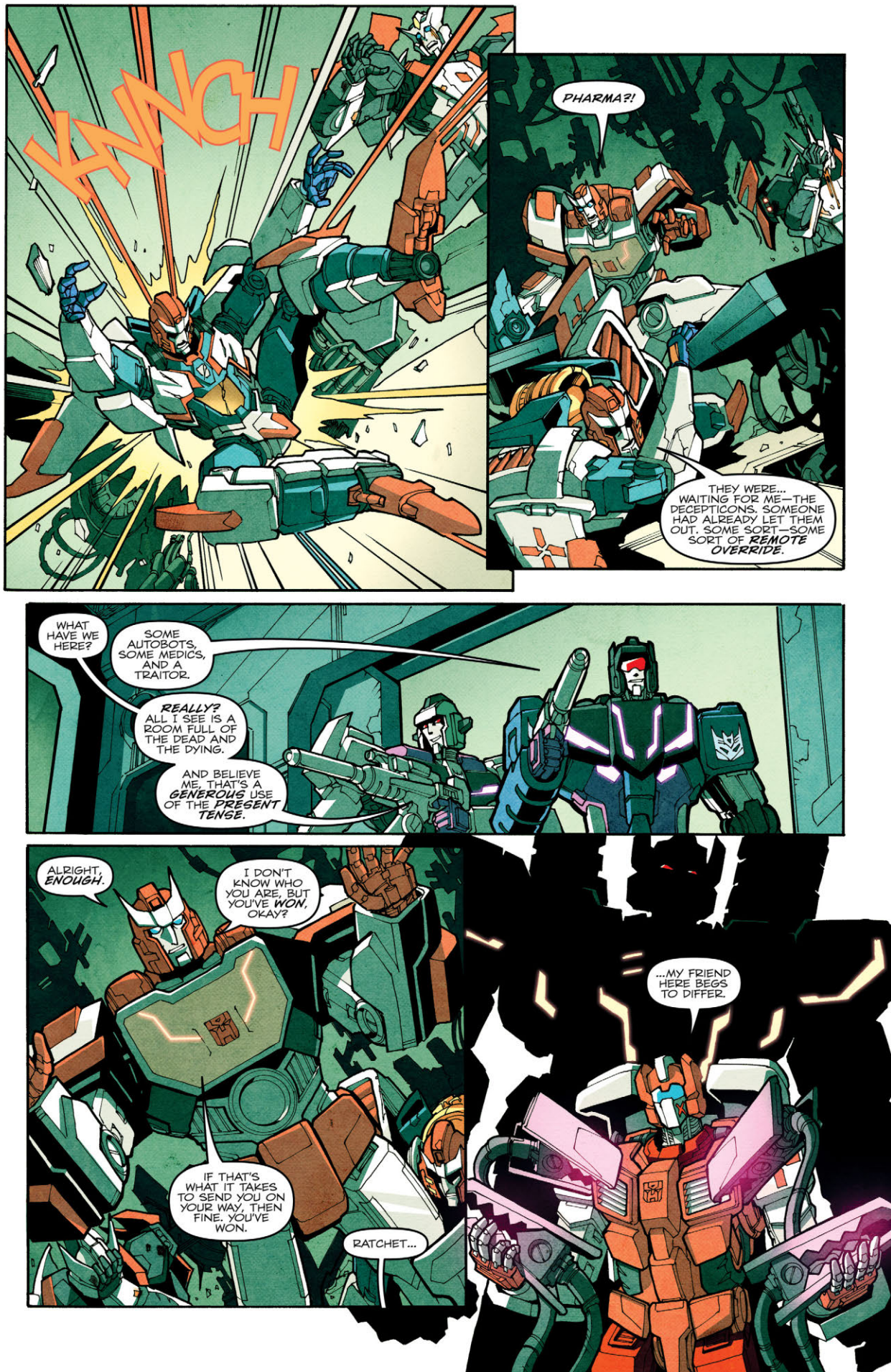

BONK
I THINK YOU SHOULD SLEEP THIS ONE OFF.
I'LL TAKE HIM BACK TO THE WARD AND HOOK HIM UP TO A NUCLEON FEED, BUY HIM SOME TIME.
WHAT HAPPENED TO PHARMA?
HE WENT RUNNING OFF TO THE CELLS. HE SAYS HE'S WORKED OUT WHAT'S HAPPENED...

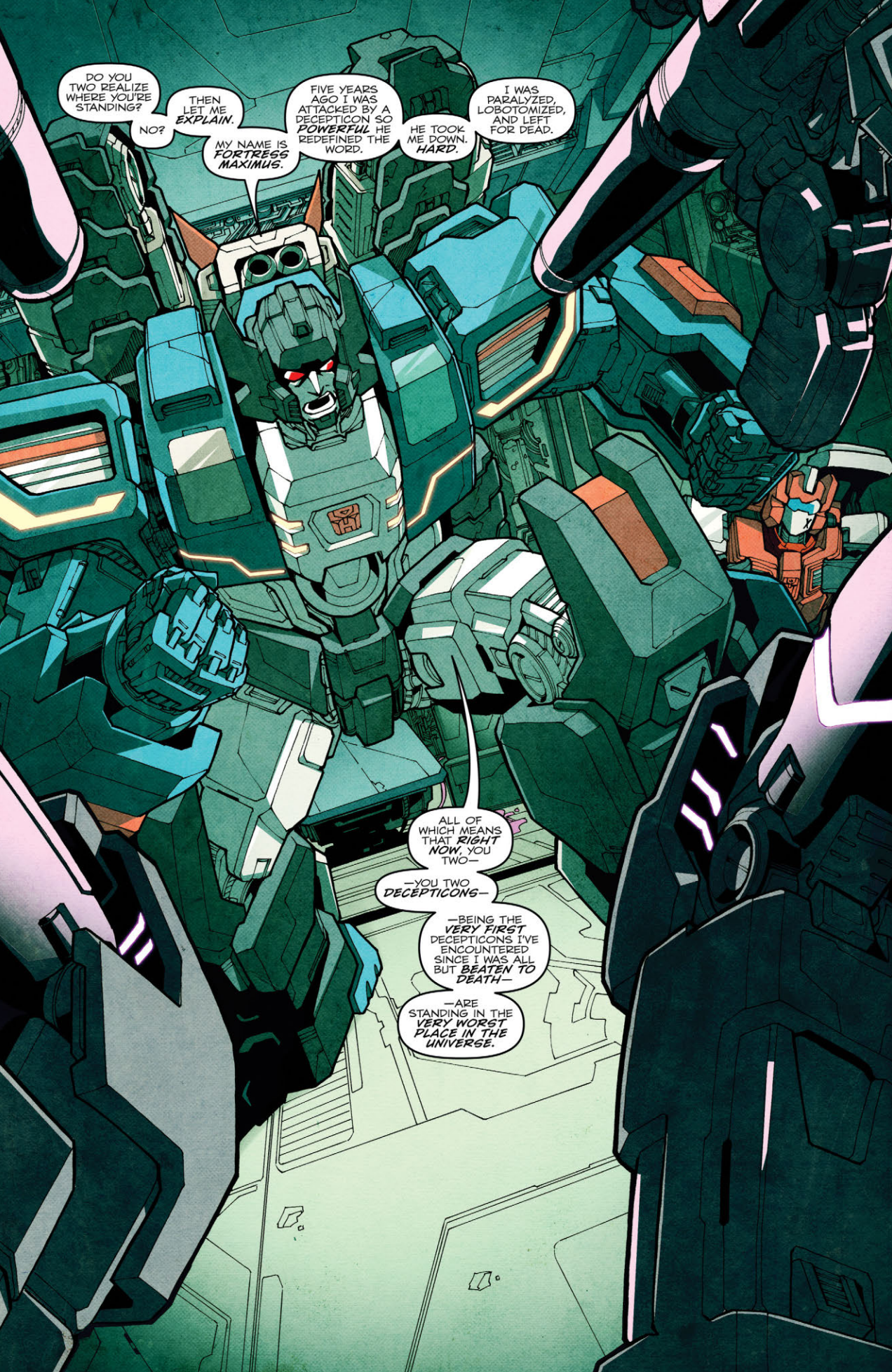

FIRST AID!
WHERE ARE YOU? WE'VE GOT A FADER!
UHHHH...
I'VE GOT YOU.


FIRST AID TOLD YOU MY THEORY, THEN? THAT MEDICS ARE UNIQUELY REGISTANT TO THE EFFECTS OF THE VIRUS?
ALL I KNOW IS THAT THIS AUTOBOT IS SCARED. I'M JUST PLEASED THAT MY HANDS ARE STILL GOOD FOR SOMETHING.

RATCHET? I NEED TO TALK TO YOU...
STAY BACK! YOU MIGHT GET INFECTED.

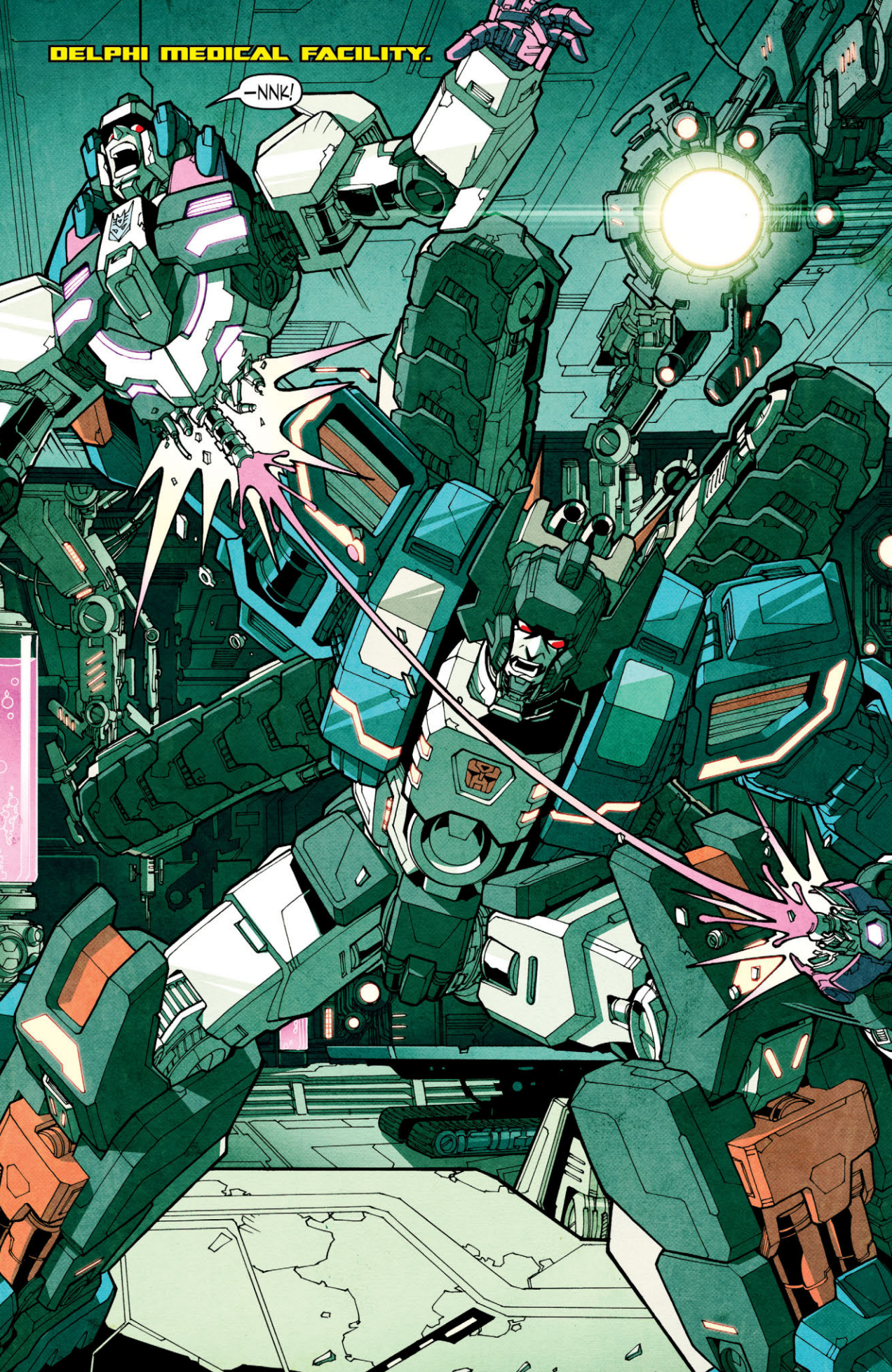

I THINK IT'S A BIT LATE FOR THAT.
PIPES MUST'VE SPRAYED ME.
I'M SORRY.

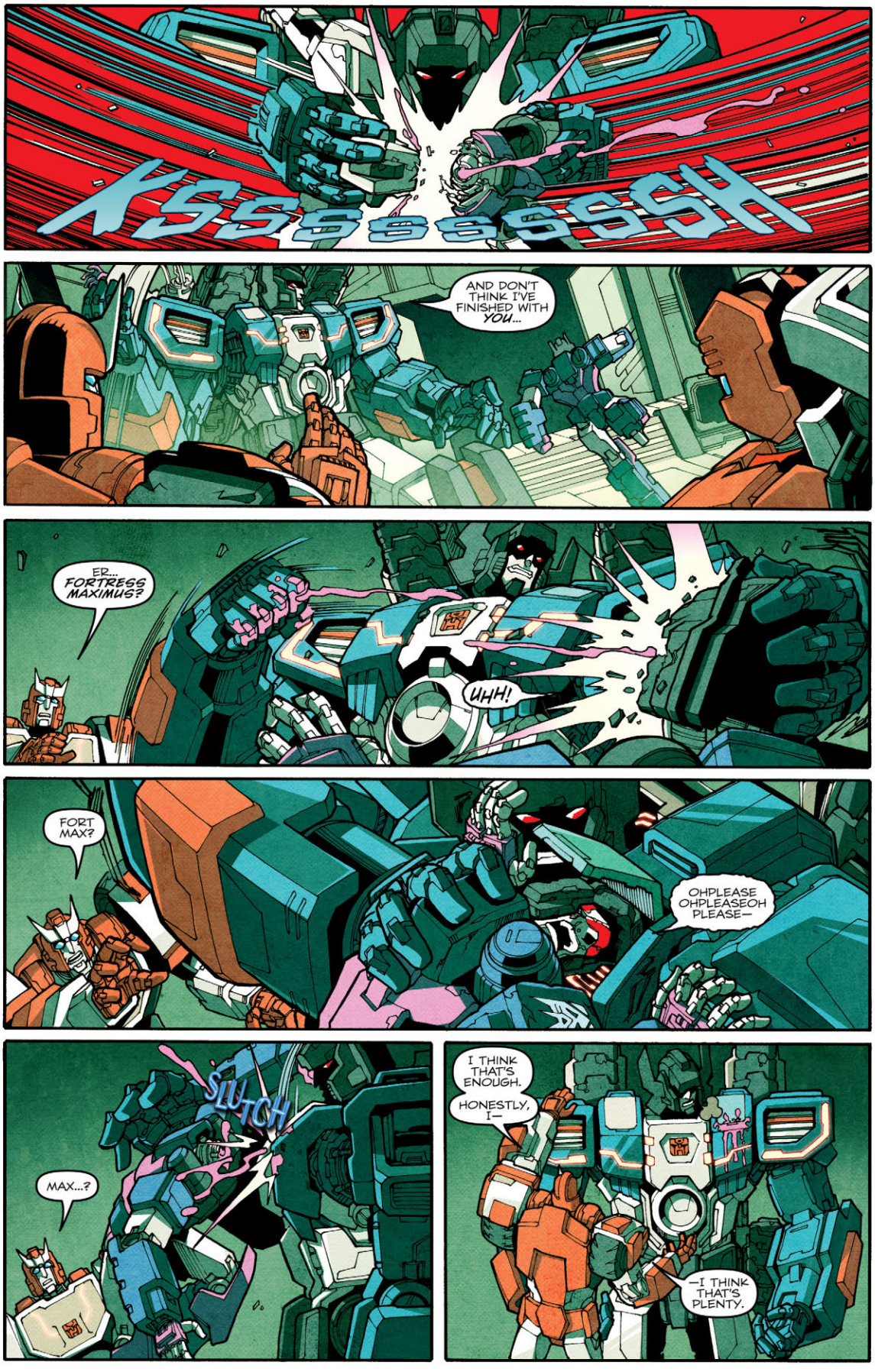

KNNCH
PHARMA?!
THEY WERE... WAITING FOR ME—THE DECEPTICONS. SOMEONE HAD ALREADY LET THEM OUT. SOME SORT—SOME SORT OF REMOTE OVERRIDE.
WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
SOME AUTOBOTS, SOME MEDICS, AND A TRAITOR.
REALLY? ALL I SEE IS A ROOM FULL OF THE DEAD AND THE DYING.
AND BELIEVE ME, THAT'S A GENEROUS USE OF THE PRESENT TENSE.
ALRIGHT, ENOUGH.
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT YOU'VE WON, OKAY?
IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES TO SEND YOU ON YOUR WAY, THEN FINE. YOU'VE WON.
RATCHET...
...MY FRIEND HERE BEGS TO DIFFER.

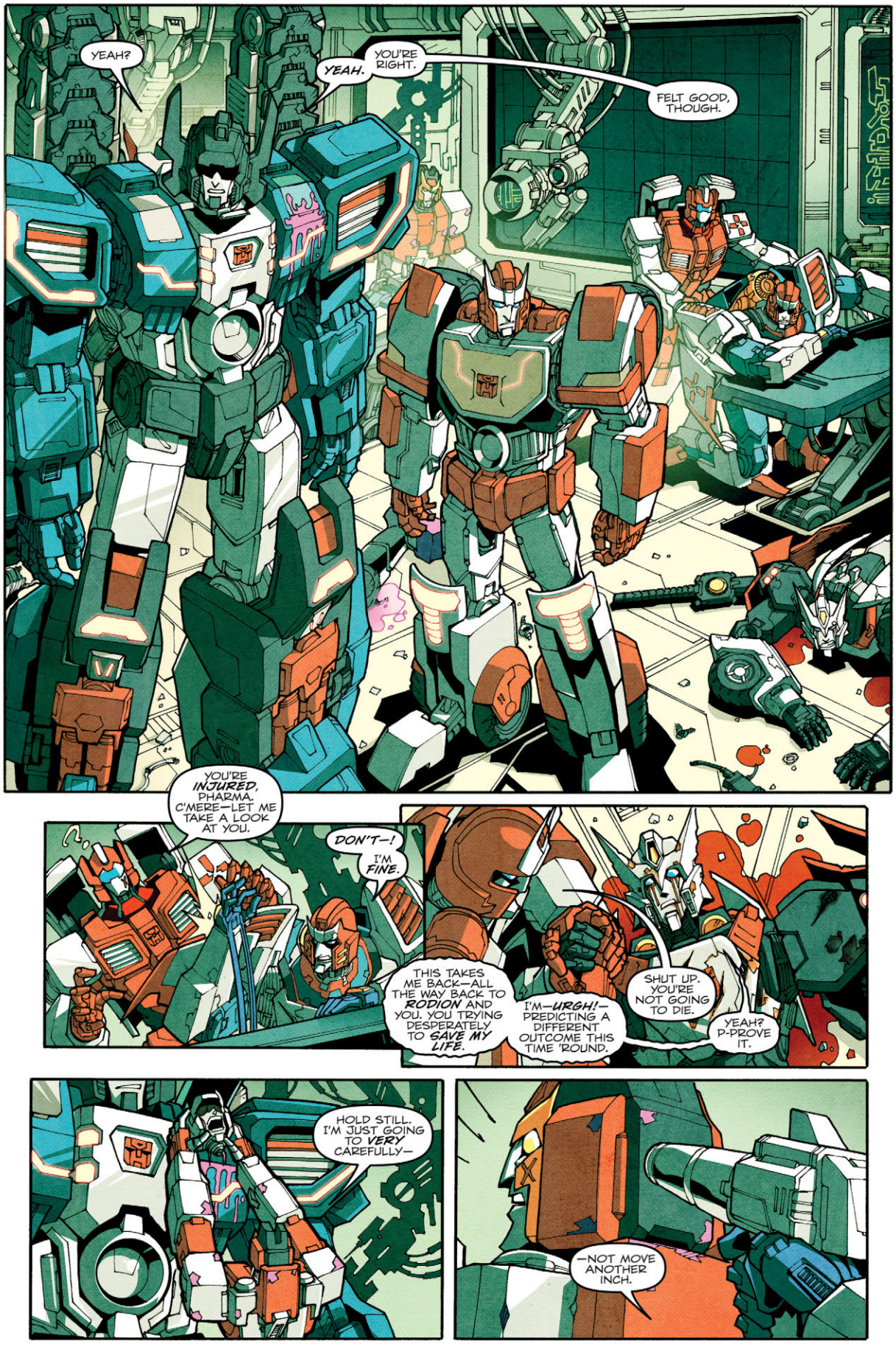

DO YOU TWO REALIZE WHERE YOU'RE STANDING?
NO?
THEN LET ME EXPLAIN.
MY NAME IS FORTRESS MAXIMUS.
FIVE YEARS AGO I WAS ATTACKED BY A DECEPTICON SO POWERFUL HE REDEFINED THE WORD.
HE TOOK ME DOWN. HARD.
I WAS PARALYZED, LOBOTOMIZED, AND LEFT FOR DEAD.
ALL OF WHICH MEANS THAT RIGHT NOW, YOU TWO—
—YOU TWO DECEPTICONS—
—BEING THE VERY FIRST DECEPTICONS I'VE ENCOUNTERED SINCE I WAS ALL BUT BEATEN TO DEATH—
—ARE STANDING IN THE VERY WORST PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE.

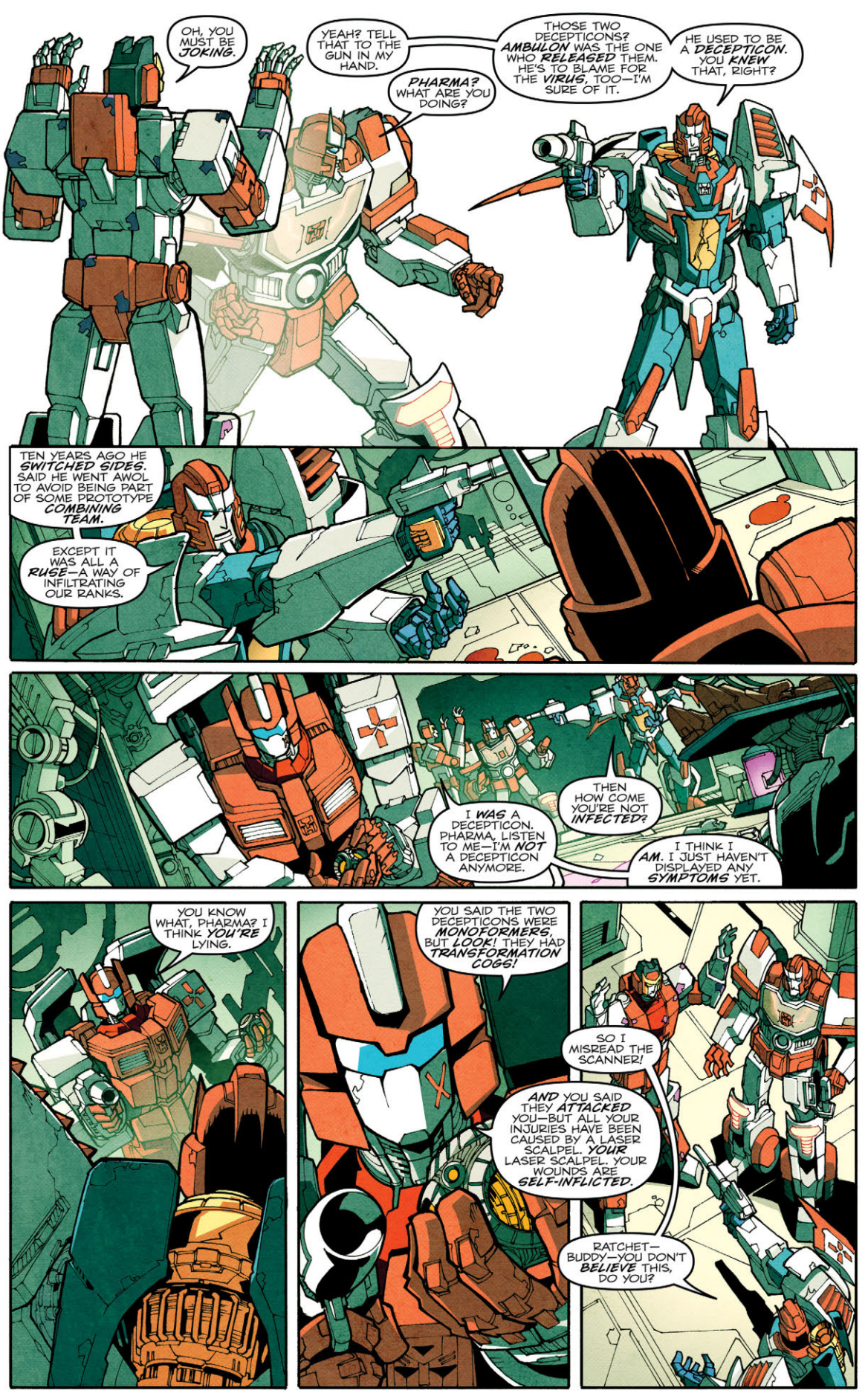
□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #4 COVER B
BY **NICK ROCHE** COLORS BY **JOSH BURCHAM**

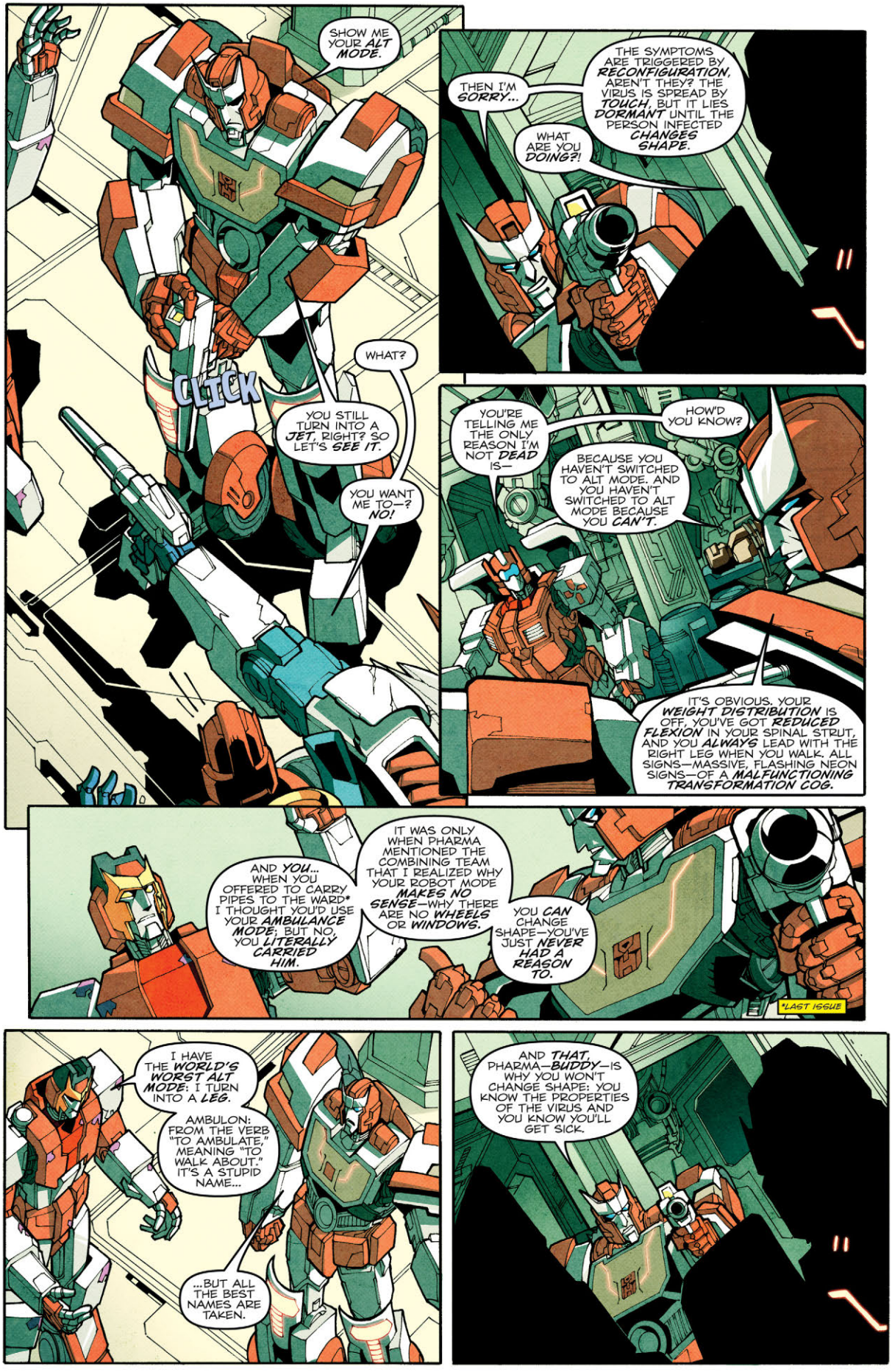
□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #5 COVER A
BY **ALEX MILNE** COLORS BY **JOSH PEREZ**

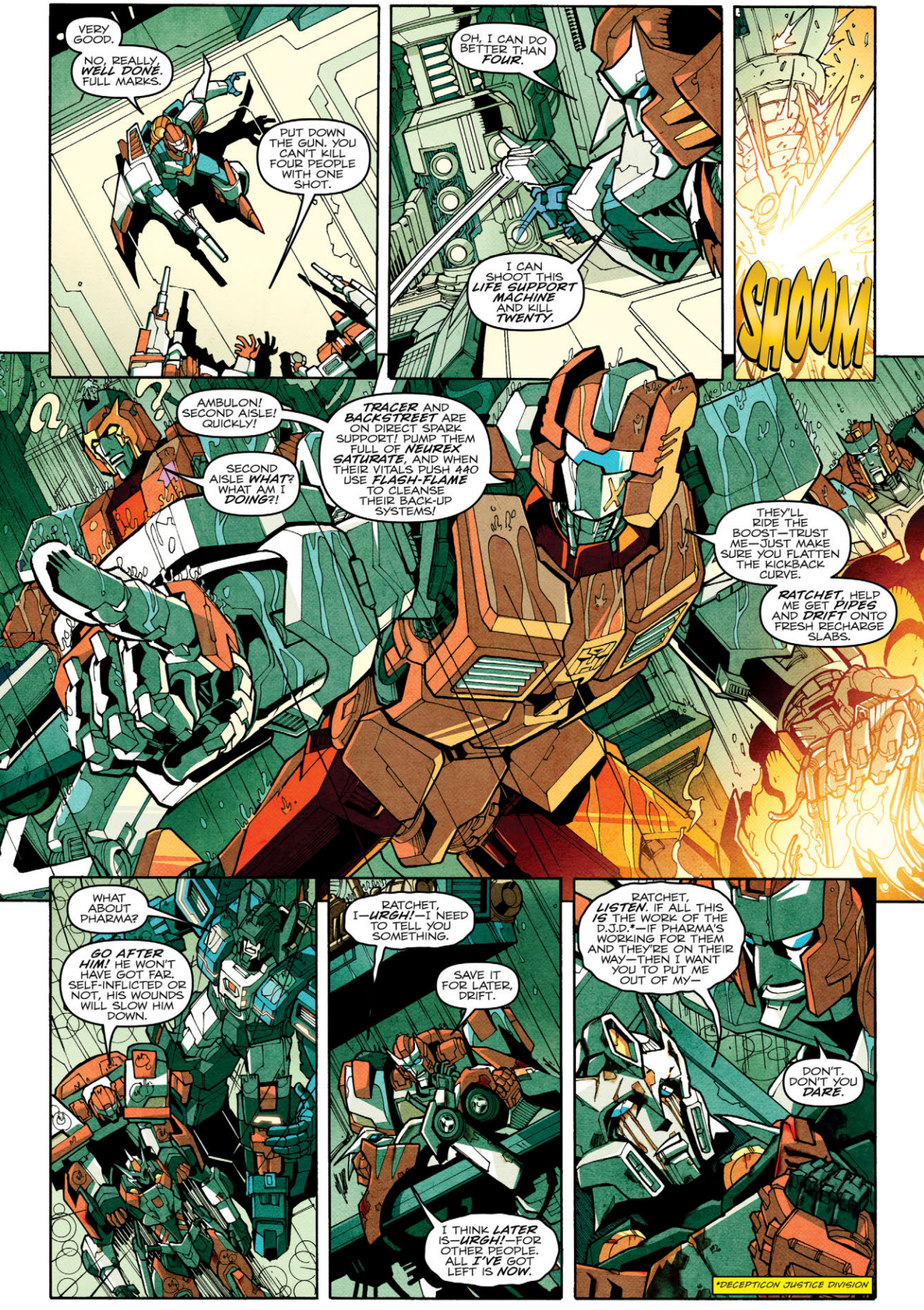

DELPHI MEDICAL FACILITY.
—NNK!

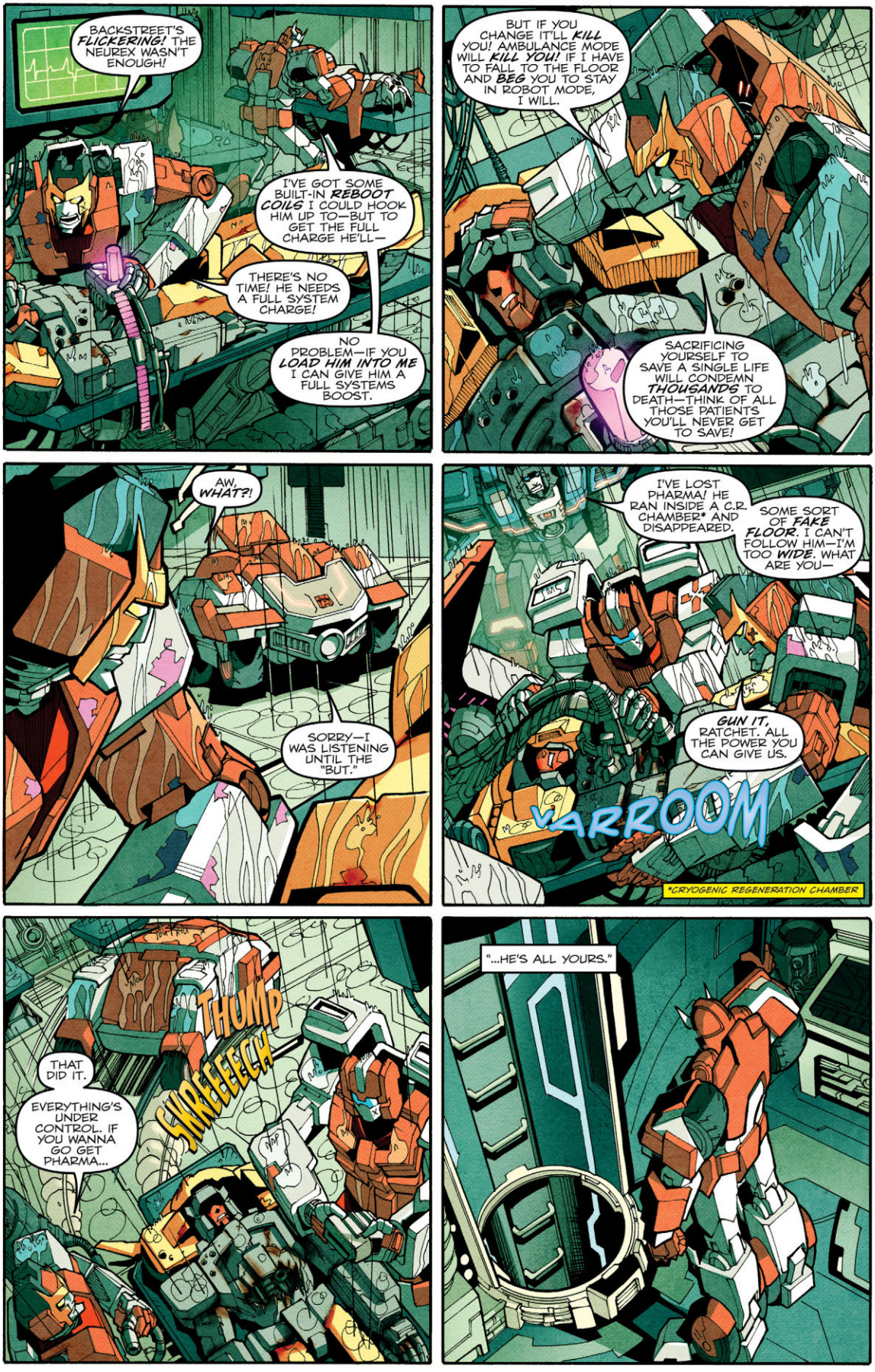

KSSSSSSSH
AND DON'T THINK I'VE FINISHED WITH YOU...
ER... FORTRESS MAXIMUS?
UHH!
FORT MAX?
OHPLEASE OHPLEASEOH PLEASE—
SLUTCH
MAX...?
I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH.
HONESTLY, I—
—I THINK THAT'S PLENTY.

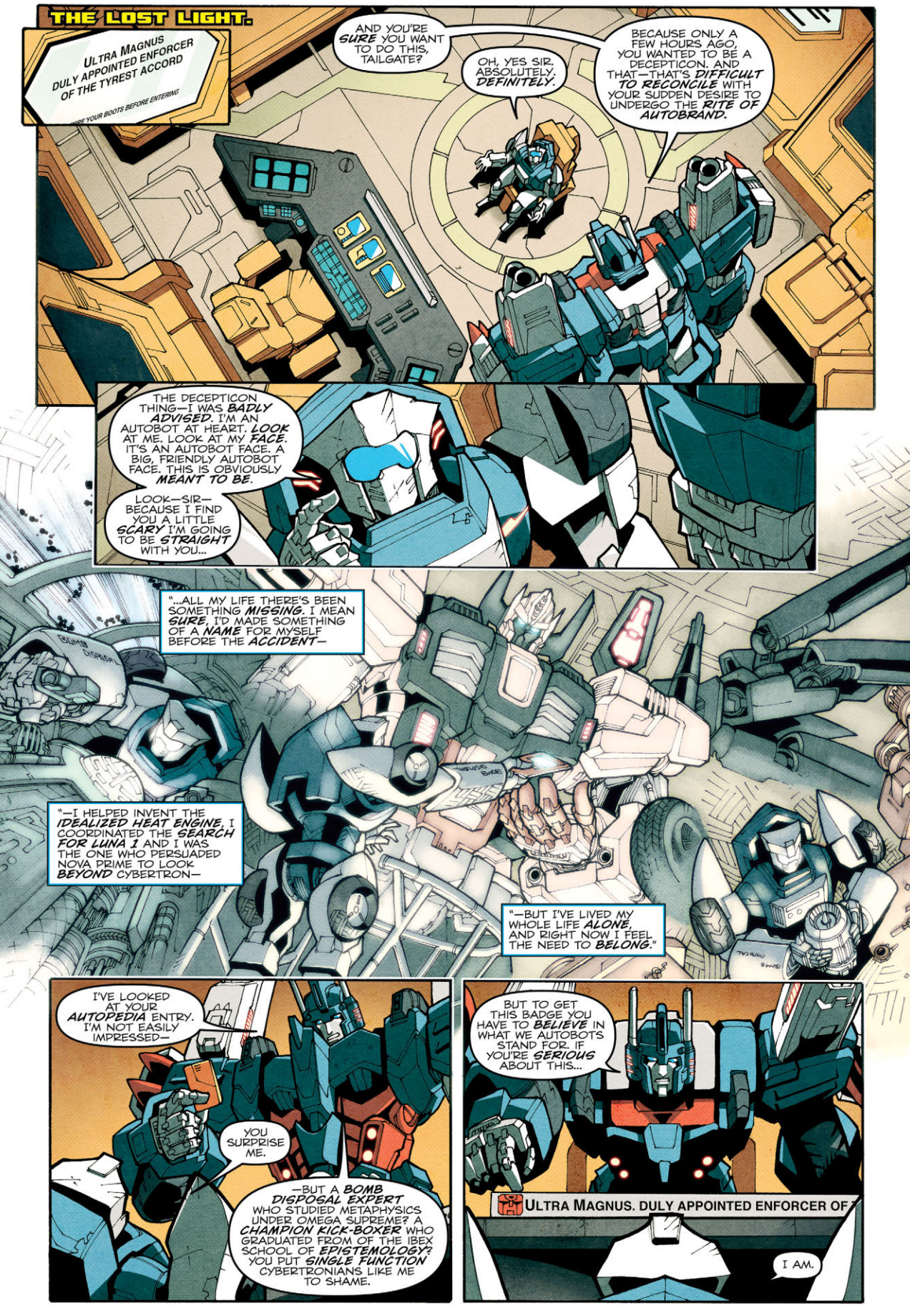

YEAH?
YEAH.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
FELT GOOD, THOUGH.
YOU'RE INJURED, PHARMA. C'MERE—LET ME TAKE A LOOK AT YOU.
DON'T—!
I'M FINE.
THIS TAKES ME BACK—ALL THE WAY BACK TO RODION AND YOU. YOU TRYING DESPERATELY TO SAVE MY LIFE.
I'M—URGH!—PREDICTING A DIFFERENT OUTCOME THIS TIME 'ROUND.
SHUT UP. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE.
YEAH? P-PROVE IT.
HOLD STILL. I'M JUST GOING TO VERY CAREFULLY—
—NOT MOVE ANOTHER INCH.

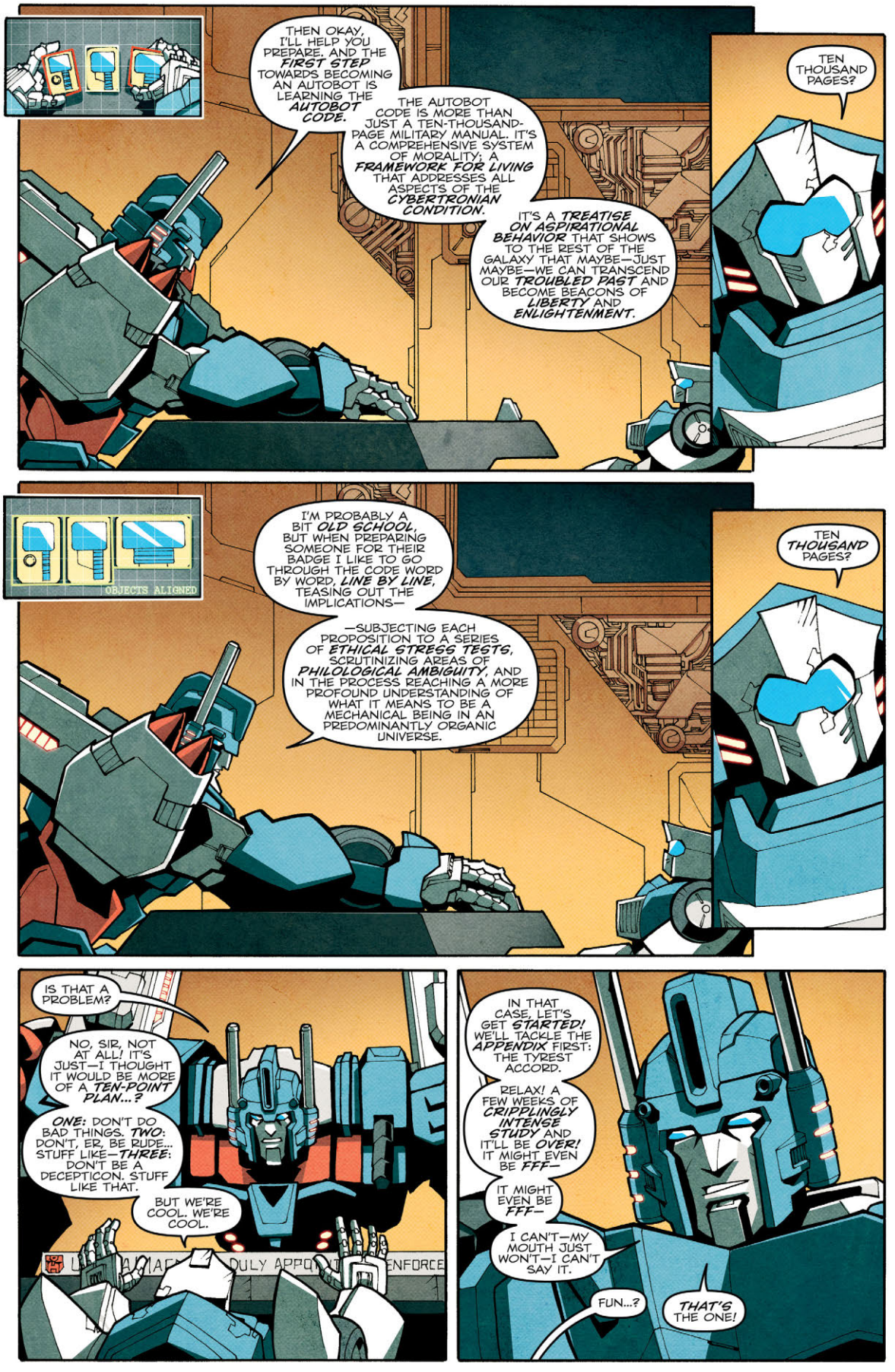

OH, YOU MUST BE JOKING.
YEAH? TELL THAT TO THE GUN IN MY HAND.
PHARMA? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THOSE TWO DECEPTICONS? AMBULON WAS THE ONE WHO RELEASED THEM. HE'S TO BLAME FOR THE VIRUS, TOO—I'M SURE OF IT.
HE USED TO BE A DECEPTICON. YOU KNEW THAT, RIGHT?
TEN YEARS AGO HE SWITCHED SIDES. SAID HE WENT AWOL TO AVOID BEING PART OF SOME PROTOTYPE COMBINING TEAM.
EXCEPT IT WAS ALL A RUSE—A WAY OF INFILTRATING OUR RANKS.
I WAS A DECEPTICON. PHARMA, LISTEN TO ME—I'M NOT A DECEPTICON ANYMORE.
THEN HOW COME YOU'RE NOT INFECTED?
I THINK I AM. I JUST HAVEN'T DISPLAYED ANY SYMPTOMS YET.
YOU KNOW WHAT, PHARMA? I THINK YOU'RE LYING.
YOU SAID THE TWO DECEPTICONS WERE MONOFORMERS, BUT LOOK! THEY HAD TRANSFORMATION COGS!
SO I MISREAD THE SCANNER!
AND YOU SAID THEY ATTACKED YOU—BUT ALL YOUR INJURIES HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY A LASER SCALPEL. YOUR LASER SCALPEL. YOUR WOUNDS ARE SELF-INFLICTED.
RATCHET—BUDDY—YOU DON'T BELIEVE THIS, DO YOU?


SHOW ME YOUR ALT MODE.
CLICK
WHAT?
YOU STILL TURN INTO A JET, RIGHT? SO LET'S SEE IT.
YOU WANT ME TO—? NO!
THEN I'M SORRY...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
THE SYMPTOMS ARE TRIGGERED BY RECONFIGURATION, AREN'T THEY? THE VIRUS IS SPREAD BY TOUCH, BUT IT LIES DORMANT UNTIL THE PERSON INFECTED CHANGES SHAPE.
YOU'RE TELLING ME THE ONLY REASON I'M NOT DEAD IS—
HOW'D YOU KNOW?
BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T SWITCHED TO ALT MODE. AND YOU HAVEN'T SWITCHED TO ALT MODE BECAUSE YOU CAN'T.
IT'S OBVIOUS. YOUR WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION IS OFF, YOU'VE GOT REDUCED FLEXION IN YOUR SPINAL STRUT, AND YOU ALWAYS LEAD WITH THE RIGHT LEG WHEN YOU WALK. ALL SIGNS—MASSIVE, FLASHING NEON SIGNS—OF A MALFUNCTIONING TRANSFORMATION COG.
AND YOU... WHEN YOU OFFERED TO CARRY PIPES TO THE WARD* I THOUGHT YOU'D USE YOUR AMBULANCE MODE; BUT NO, YOU LITERALLY CARRIED HIM.
IT WAS ONLY WHEN PHARMA MENTIONED THE COMBINING TEAM THAT I REALIZED WHY YOUR ROBOT MODE MAKES NO SENSE—WHY THERE ARE NO WHEELS OR WINDOWS.
YOU CAN CHANGE SHAPE—YOU'VE JUST NEVER HAD A REASON TO.
*LAST ISSUE
I HAVE THE WORLD'S WORST ALT MODE: I TURN INTO A LEG.
AMBULON: FROM THE VERB "TO AMBULATE," MEANING "TO WALK ABOUT." IT'S A STUPID NAME...
...BUT ALL THE BEST NAMES ARE TAKEN.
AND THAT, PHARMA—BUDDY—IS WHY YOU WON'T CHANGE SHAPE: YOU KNOW THE PROPERTIES OF THE VIRUS AND YOU KNOW YOU'LL GET SICK.

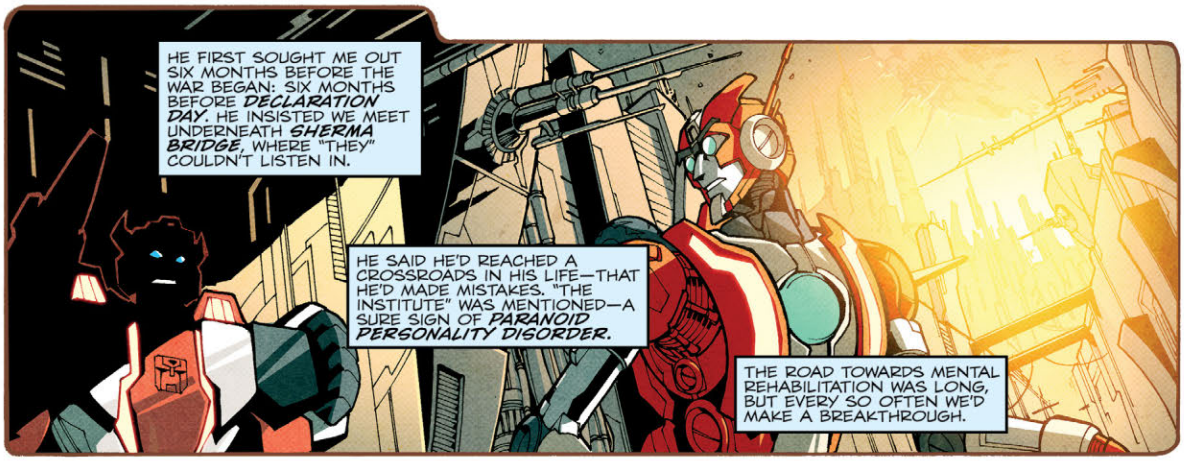

VERY GOOD.
NO, REALLY, WELL DONE. FULL MARKS.
PUT DOWN THE GUN. YOU CAN'T KILL FOUR PEOPLE WITH ONE SHOT.
OH, I CAN DO BETTER THAN FOUR.
I CAN SHOOT THIS LIFE SUPPORT MACHINE AND KILL TWENTY.
SHOOM
AMBULON! SECOND AISLE! QUICKLY!
SECOND AISLE WHAT? WHAT AM I DOING?!
TRACER AND BACKSTREET ARE ON DIRECT SPARK SUPPORT! PUMP THEM FULL OF NEUREX SATURATE, AND WHEN THEIR VITALS PUSH 440 USE FLASH-FLAME TO CLEANSE THEIR BACK-UP SYSTEMS!
THEY'LL RIDE THE BOOST—TRUST ME—JUST MAKE SURE YOU FLATTEN THE KICKBACK CURVE.
RATCHET, HELP ME GET PIPES AND DRIFT ONTO FRESH RECHARGE SLABS.
WHAT ABOUT PHARMA?
GO AFTER HIM! HE WON'T HAVE GOT FAR. SELF-INFLICTED OR NOT, HIS WOUNDS WILL SLOW HIM DOWN.
RATCHET, I—URGH!—I NEED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.
SAVE IT FOR LATER, DRIFT.
I THINK LATER IS—URGH!—FOR OTHER PEOPLE. ALL I'VE GOT LEFT IS NOW.
RATCHET, LISTEN. IF ALL THIS IS THE WORK OF THE D.J.D.*—IF PHARMA'S WORKING FOR THEM AND THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY—THEN I WANT YOU TO PUT ME OUT OF MY—
DON'T. DON'T YOU DARE.
*DECEPTICON JUSTICE DIVISION

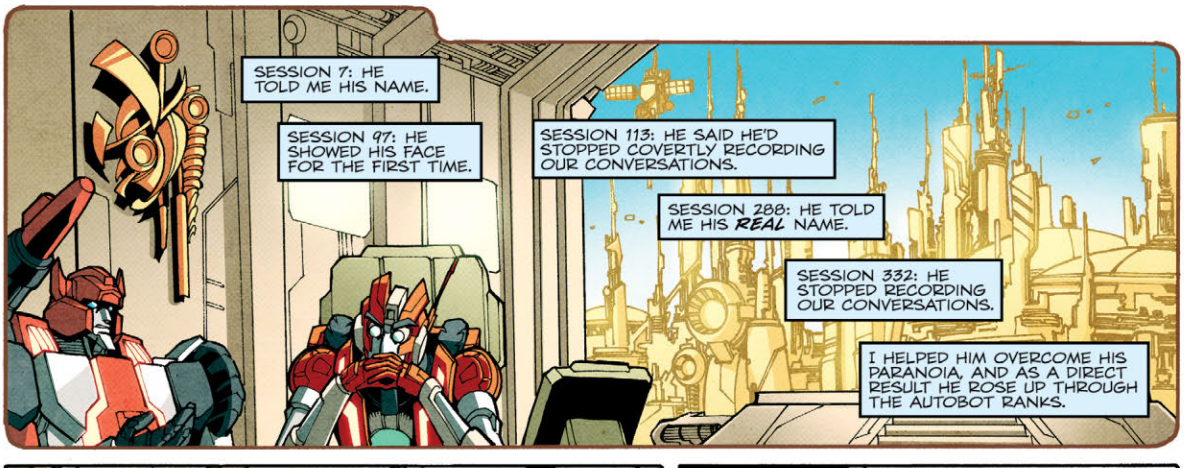

BACKSTREET'S FLICKERING! THE NEUREX WASN'T ENOUGH!
I'VE GOT SOME BUILT-IN REBOOT COILS I COULD HOOK HIM UP TO—BUT TO GET THE FULL CHARGE HE'LL—
THERE'S NO TIME! HE NEEDS A FULL SYSTEM CHARGE!
NO PROBLEM—IF YOU LOAD HIM INTO ME I CAN GIVE HIM A FULL SYSTEMS BOOST.
BUT IF YOU CHANGE IT'LL KILL YOU! AMBULANCE MODE WILL KILL YOU! IF I HAVE TO FALL TO THE FLOOR AND BEG YOU TO STAY IN ROBOT MODE, I WILL.
SACRIFICING YOURSELF TO SAVE A SINGLE LIFE WILL CONDEMN THOUSANDS TO DEATH—THINK OF ALL THOSE PATIENTS YOU'LL NEVER GET TO SAVE!
AW, WHAT?!
SORRY—I WAS LISTENING UNTIL THE "BUT."
I'VE LOST PHARMA! HE RAN INSIDE A C.R. CHAMBER* AND DISAPPEARED.
SOME SORT OF FAKE FLOOR. I CAN'T FOLLOW HIM—I'M TOO WIDE. WHAT ARE YOU—
GUN IT, RATCHET. ALL THE POWER YOU CAN GIVE US.
VARROOM
*CRYOGENIC REGENERATION CHAMBER
THUMP
SKREEEECH
THAT DID IT.
EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL. IF YOU WANNA GO GET PHARMA...
"...HE'S ALL YOURS."

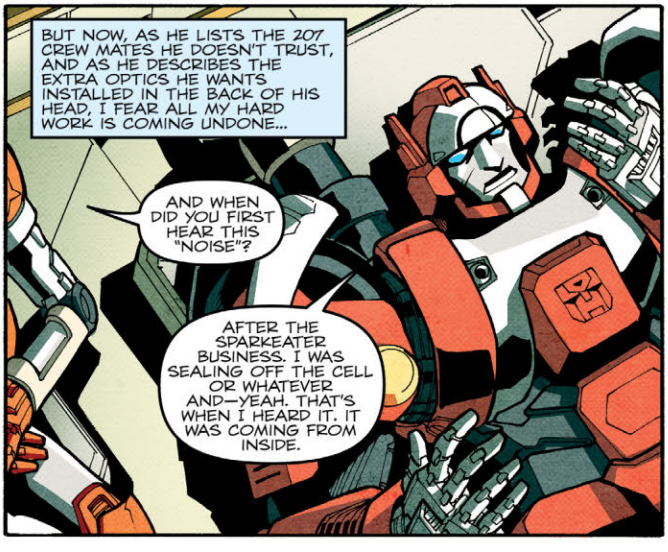

THE LOST LIGHT.
ULTRA MAGNUS DULY APPOINTED ENFORCER OF THE TYREST ACCORD
WIPE YOUR BOOTS BEFORE ENTERING
AND YOU'RE SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS, TAILGATE?
OH, YES SIR, ABSOLUTELY. DEFINITELY.
BECAUSE ONLY A FEW HOURS AGO, YOU WANTED TO BE A DECEPTICON. AND THAT—THAT'S DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE WITH YOUR SUDDEN DESIRE TO UNDERGO THE RITE OF AUTOBRAND.
THE DECEPTICON THING—I WAS BADLY ADVISED. I'M AN AUTOBOT AT HEART. LOOK AT ME. LOOK AT MY FACE. IT'S AN AUTOBOT FACE. A BIG, FRIENDLY AUTOBOT FACE. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY MEANT TO BE.
LOOK—SIR—BECAUSE I FIND YOU A LITTLE SCARY I'M GOING TO BE STRAIGHT WITH YOU...
"...ALL MY LIFE THERE'S BEEN SOMETHING MISSING. I MEAN SURE, I'D MADE SOMETHING OF A NAME FOR MYSELF BEFORE THE ACCIDENT—
"—I HELPED INVENT THE IDEALIZED HEAT ENGINE, I COORDINATED THE SEARCH FOR LUNA 1 AND I WAS THE ONE WHO PERSUADED NOVA PRIME TO LOOK BEYOND CYBERTRON—
"—BUT I'VE LIVED MY WHOLE LIFE ALONE, AND RIGHT NOW I FEEL THE NEED TO BELONG."
I'VE LOOKED AT YOUR AUTOPEDIA ENTRY. I'M NOT EASILY IMPRESSED—
YOU SURPRISE ME.
—BUT A BOMB DISPOSAL EXPERT WHO STUDIED METAPHYSICS UNDER OMEGA SUPREME? A CHAMPION KICK-BOXER WHO GRADUATED FROM OF THE IBEX SCHOOL OF EPISTEMOLOGY? YOU PUT SINGLE FUNCTION CYBERTRONIANS LIKE ME TO SHAME.
BUT TO GET THIS BADGE YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IN WHAT WE AUTOBOTS STAND FOR. IF YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT THIS...
ULTRA MAGNUS. DULY APPOINTED ENFORCER OF
I AM.


THEN OKAY, I'LL HELP YOU PREPARE. AND THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS BECOMING AN AUTOBOT IS LEARNING THE AUTOBOT CODE.
THE AUTOBOT CODE IS MORE THAN JUST A TEN-THOUSAND-PAGE MILITARY MANUAL. IT'S A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF MORALITY; A FRAMEWORK FOR LIVING THAT ADDRESSES ALL ASPECTS OF THE CYBERTRONIAN CONDITION.
IT'S A TREATISE ON ASPIRATIONAL BEHAVIOR THAT SHOWS TO THE REST OF THE GALAXY THAT MAYBE—JUST MAYBE—WE CAN TRANSCEND OUR TROUBLED PAST AND BECOME BEACONS OF LIBERTY AND ENLIGHTENMENT.
TEN THOUSAND PAGES?
OBJECTS ALIGNED
I'M PROBABLY A BIT OLD SCHOOL, BUT WHEN PREPARING SOMEONE FOR THEIR BADGE I LIKE TO GO THROUGH THE CODE WORD BY WORD, LINE BY LINE, TEASING OUT THE IMPLICATIONS—
—SUBJECTING EACH PROPOSITION TO A SERIES OF ETHICAL STRESS TESTS, SCRUTINIZING AREAS OF PHILOLOGICAL AMBIGUITY, AND IN THE PROCESS REACHING A MORE PROFOUND UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MECHANICAL BEING IN AN PREDOMINANTLY ORGANIC UNIVERSE.
TEN THOUSAND PAGES?
IS THAT A PROBLEM?
NO, SIR, NOT AT ALL! IT'S JUST—I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE MORE OF A TEN-POINT PLAN...?
ONE: DON'T DO BAD THINGS. TWO: DON'T, ER, BE RUDE... STUFF LIKE—THREE: DON'T BE A DECEPTICON. STUFF LIKE THAT.
BUT WE'RE COOL. WE'RE COOL.
IN THAT CASE, LET'S GET STARTED! WE'LL TACKLE THE APPENDIX FIRST: THE TYREST ACCORD.
RELAX! A FEW WEEKS OF CRIPPLINGLY INTENSE STUDY AND IT'LL BE OVER! IT MIGHT EVEN BE FFF—
IT MIGHT EVEN BE FFF—
I CAN'T—MY MOUTH JUST WON'T—I CAN'T SAY IT.
FUN...?
THAT'S THE ONE!

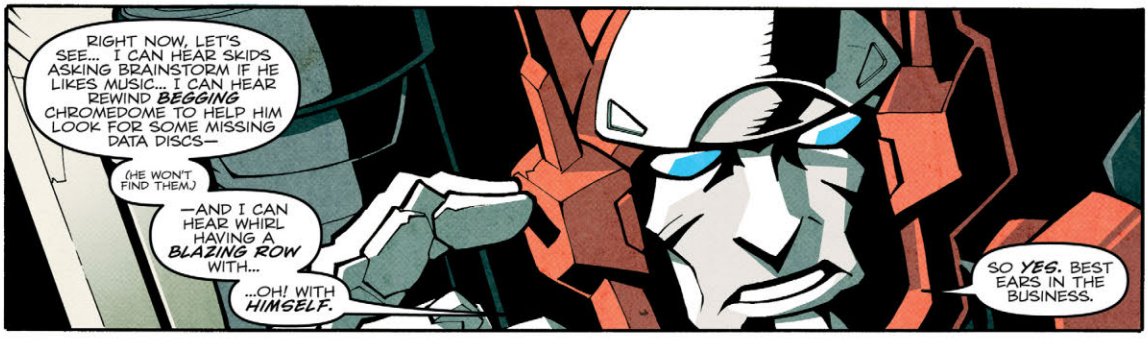
RUNG'S OFFICE.
CASE NOTES: PATIENT O5-GTF10-BTA01
FOR A LONG TIME, IF YOU'D ASKED ME TO JUSTIFY WHAT I DO—IF YOU'D SAID, "PROVE THAT PSYCHOTHERAPY WORKS"—I'D HAVE GIVEN YOU A TWO-WORD REPLY: RED ALERT.


HE FIRST SOUGHT ME OUT SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WAR BEGAN: SIX MONTHS BEFORE DECLARATION DAY. HE INSISTED WE MEET UNDERNEATH SHERMA BRIDGE, WHERE "THEY" COULDN'T LISTEN IN.
HE SAID HE'D REACHED A CROSSROADS IN HIS LIFE—THAT HE'D MADE MISTAKES. "THE INSTITUTE" WAS MENTIONED—A SURE SIGN OF PARANOID PERSONALITY DISORDER.
THE ROAD TOWARDS MENTAL REHABILITATION WAS LONG, BUT EVERY SO OFTEN WE'D MAKE A BREAKTHROUGH.


SESSION 7: HE TOLD ME HIS NAME.
SESSION 97: HE SHOWED HIS FACE FOR THE FIRST TIME.
SESSION 113: HE SAID HE'D STOPPED COVERTLY RECORDING OUR CONVERSATIONS.
SESSION 288: HE TOLD ME HIS REAL NAME.
SESSION 332: HE STOPPED RECORDING OUR CONVERSATIONS.
I HELPED HIM OVERCOME HIS PARANOIA, AND AS A DIRECT RESULT HE ROSE UP THROUGH THE AUTOBOT RANKS.


BUT NOW, AS HE LISTS THE 207 CREW MATES HE DOESN'T TRUST, AND AS HE DESCRIBES THE EXTRA OPTICS HE WANTS INSTALLED IN THE BACK OF HIS HEAD, I FEAR ALL MY HARD WORK IS COMING UNDONE...
AND WHEN DID YOU FIRST HEAR THIS "NOISE"?
AFTER THE SPARKEATER BUSINESS. I WAS SEALING OFF THE CELL OR WHATEVER AND—YEAH. THAT'S WHEN I HEARD IT. IT WAS COMING FROM INSIDE.

AND IT'S A NOISE ONLY YOU CAN HEAR...
OBVIOUSLY I KNOW HOW THAT SOUNDS, BUT THESE DAYS MY AUDIO RECEPTORS ARE MORE SENSITIVE THAN EVER.
YOU THINK IT'S QUIET IN HERE? IT'S NOT.


RIGHT NOW, LET'S SEE... I CAN HEAR SKIDS ASKING BRAINSTORM IF HE LIKES MUSIC... I CAN HEAR REWIND BEGGING CHROMEDOME TO HELP HIM LOOK FOR SOME MISSING DATA DISCS—
(HE WON'T FIND THEM.)
—AND I CAN HEAR WHIRL HAVING A BLAZING ROW WITH...
...OH! WITH HIMSELF.
SO YES. BEST EARS IN THE BUSINESS.

"ANYWAY, I REMEMBERED WHAT YOU USED TO SAY ABOUT AUDITORY HALLUCINATIONS, SO I WENT BACK TO THE SPARKEATER'S CELL TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT WAS GOING ON... AND I FOUND A CRACK IN THE FLOOR.
"IT MUST'VE BEEN CAUSED BY OUR FIRST QUANTUM JUMP—THE ONE THAT FREED THE SPARKEATER. THE NOISE WAS COMING UP THROUGH THE CRACK."

RED ALERT, YOU SHOWED ME THE—
I KNOW.
YOU SHOWED ME THE SHIP'S SCHEMATICS AND—
I KNOW.
—THE SPARKEATER'S "CELL" IS AT THE LOWEST POINT OF THE SHIP. THERE'S NOTHING UNDERNEATH EXCEPT SPACE.

I RECORDED IT.
THE NOISE.
WANNA LISTEN?

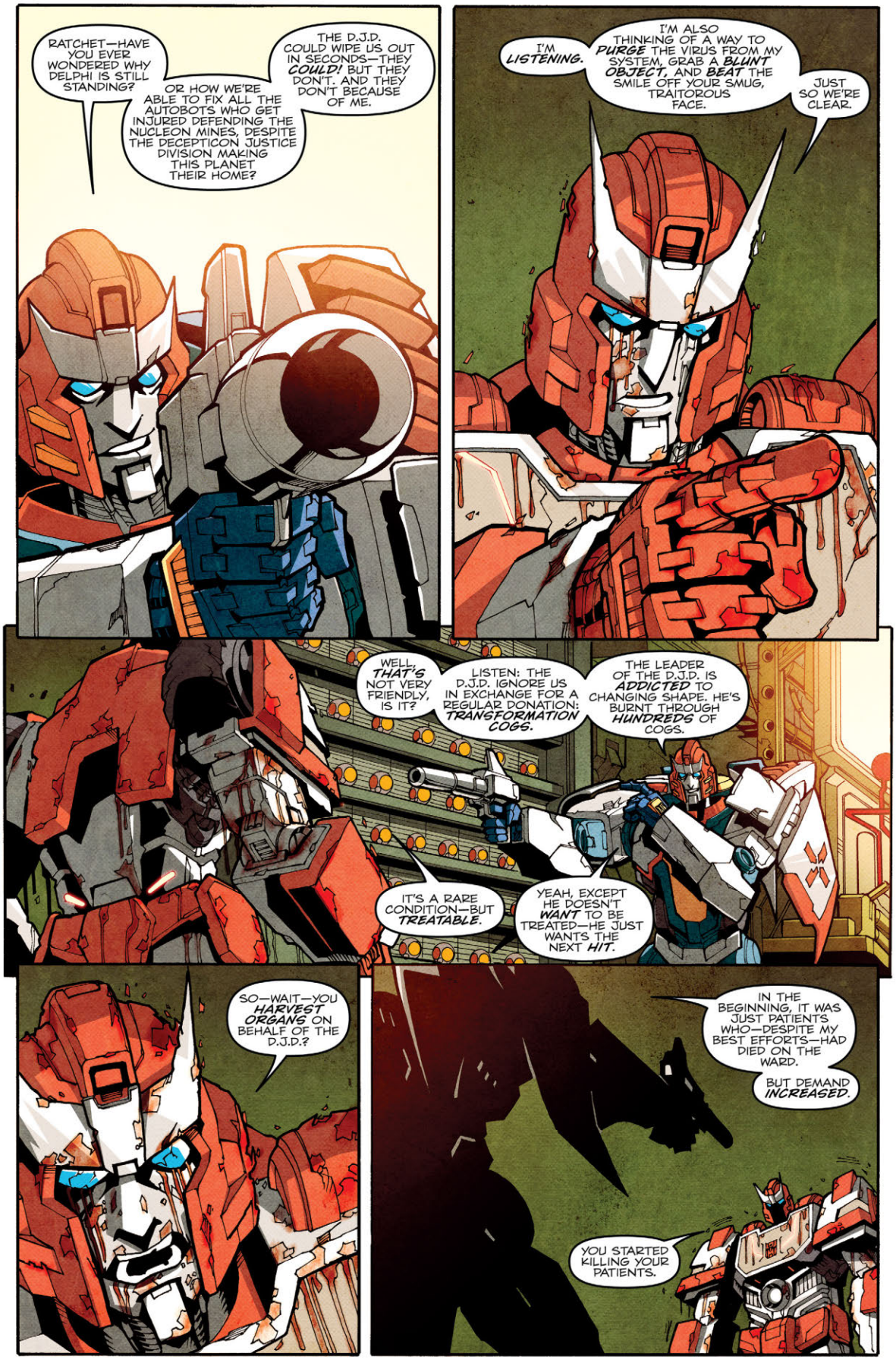
MMMMMMMMMMMM
I THINK IT'S A WEAPON OR A POWER SOURCE OR... I DON'T KNOW WHAT.
I DO. I'VE BEEN A PSYCHOTHERAPIST FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS—I KNOW A VOICE WHEN I HEAR ONE.
IT'S JUST BEEN SLOWED DOWN. SPEED IT UP AND PLAY IT BACK.

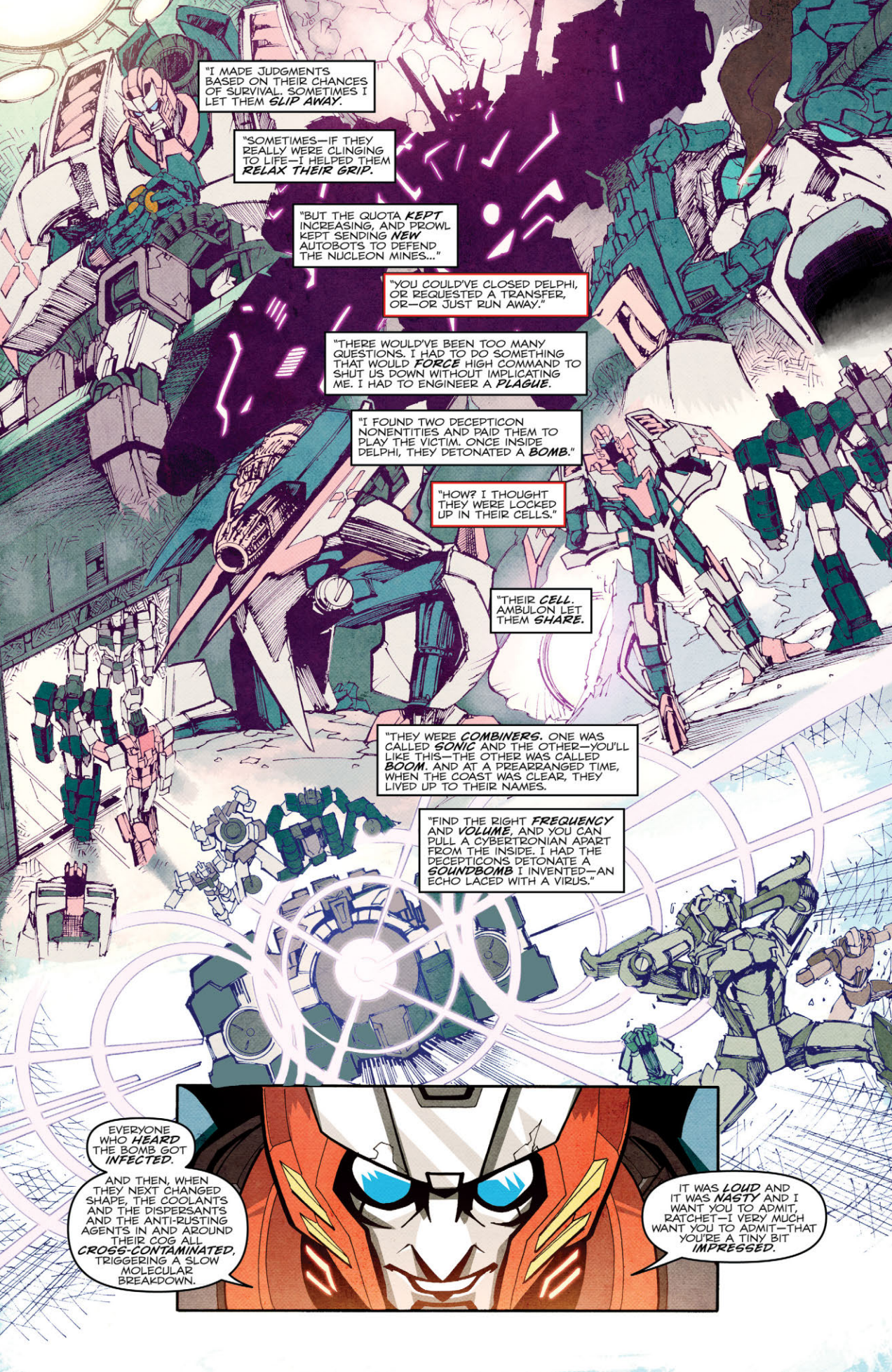
CLICK

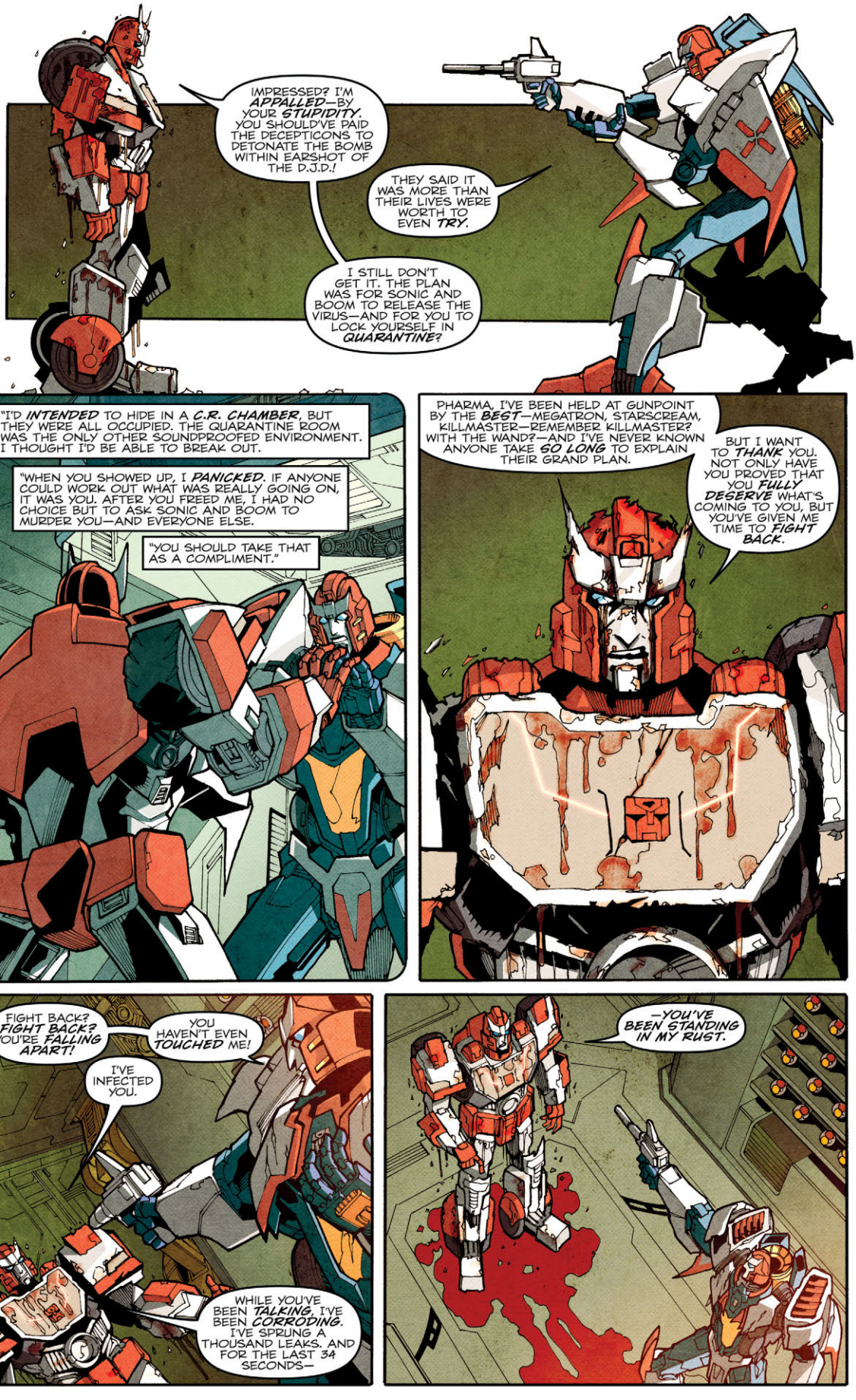
ME... KILL...
ME... KILL...
ME... KILL...

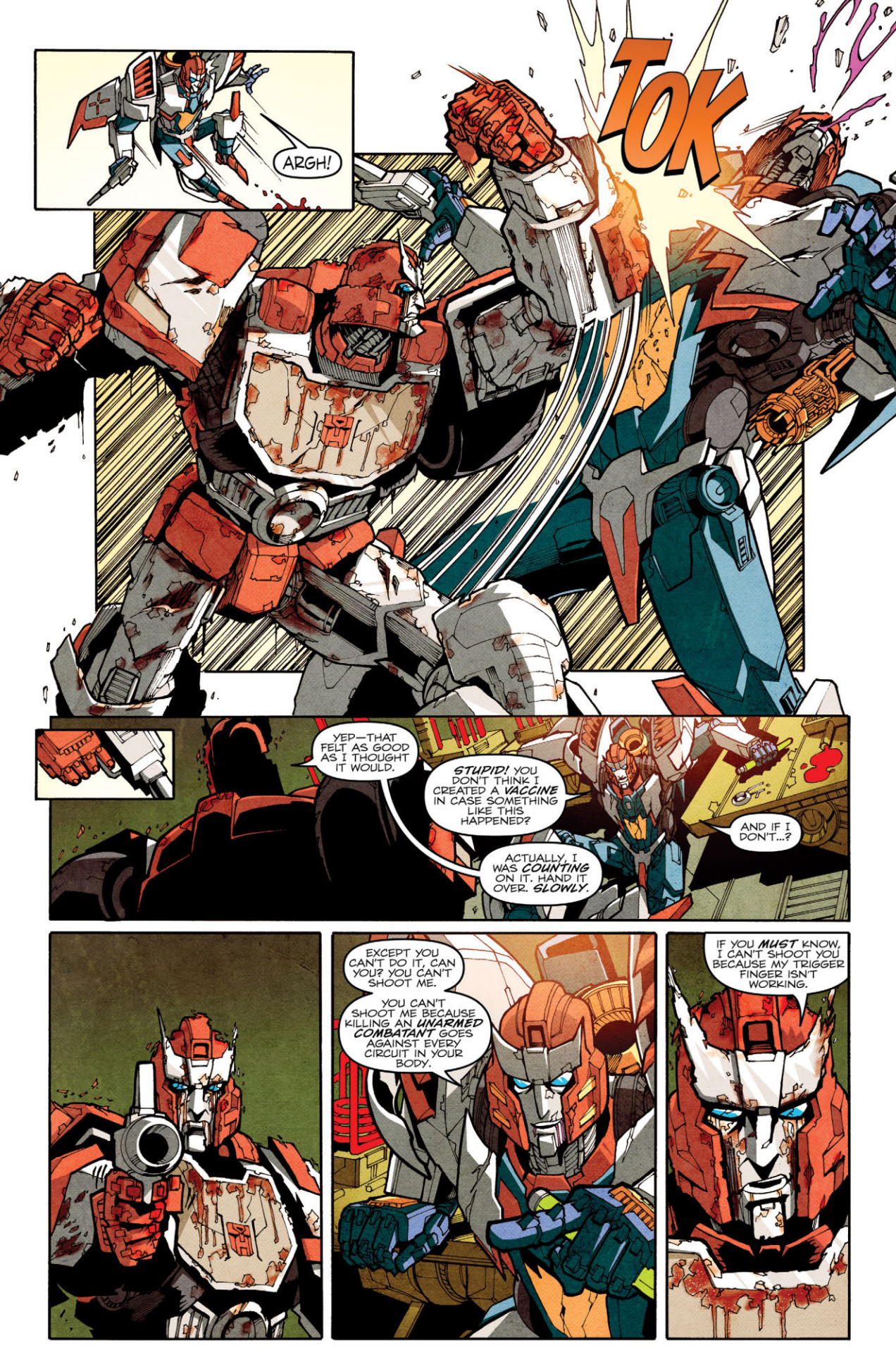
AND WHAT'S PARTICULARLY INTERESTING ABOUT THIS FOOTNOTE IS THE TRANSITIVE VERB IN LINE THREE, WHICH BEGS ALL SORTS OF QUESTIONS ABOUT...
TAILGATE?
I'M NOT CONVINCED YOU'RE PAYING ATTENTION.
...
WHAT?
OH.
SORRY—I, ER, I THOUGHT I SAW SOME GRAFFITI ON YOUR DESK. YEAH, SOME—SOME REALLY TINY GRAFFITI:
"ULTRA MAGNUS IS AN O.C.D. CONTROL FREAK WHO USES LEARNING TO HURT PEOPLE."
BUT IT WAS JUST A SPECK OF DIRT.
DIRT?!
IT'S OKAY, SIR—IT'S GONE. IT CAN'T HURT YOU NOW.
SO, UM, WHERE WERE WE..?
WE'RE ON SECTION 19 OF THE TYREST ACCORD. SUBSECTION 80, PARAGRAPH FIVE: 19 (80) 5.
NINETEEN EIGHTY FIVE? REALLY?
PROBLEM?
NO...
"...I WAS JUST REMINDED OF SOMETHING."
NINETEEN... EIGHTY... FOUR.
DID WE TALK ABOUT PARAGRAPH FOUR?
NO—IT'S A REDUNDANT SUB-CLAUSE. IT WAS ADDED YEARS AGO—AFTER YOUR TIME—IN ANTICIPATION OF A THREAT THAT NEVER MATERIALIZED.
AND WHAT DID THE SUB-CLAUSE RELATE TO, EXACTLY? JUST OUT OF INTEREST.
THOUGHT WARFARE.

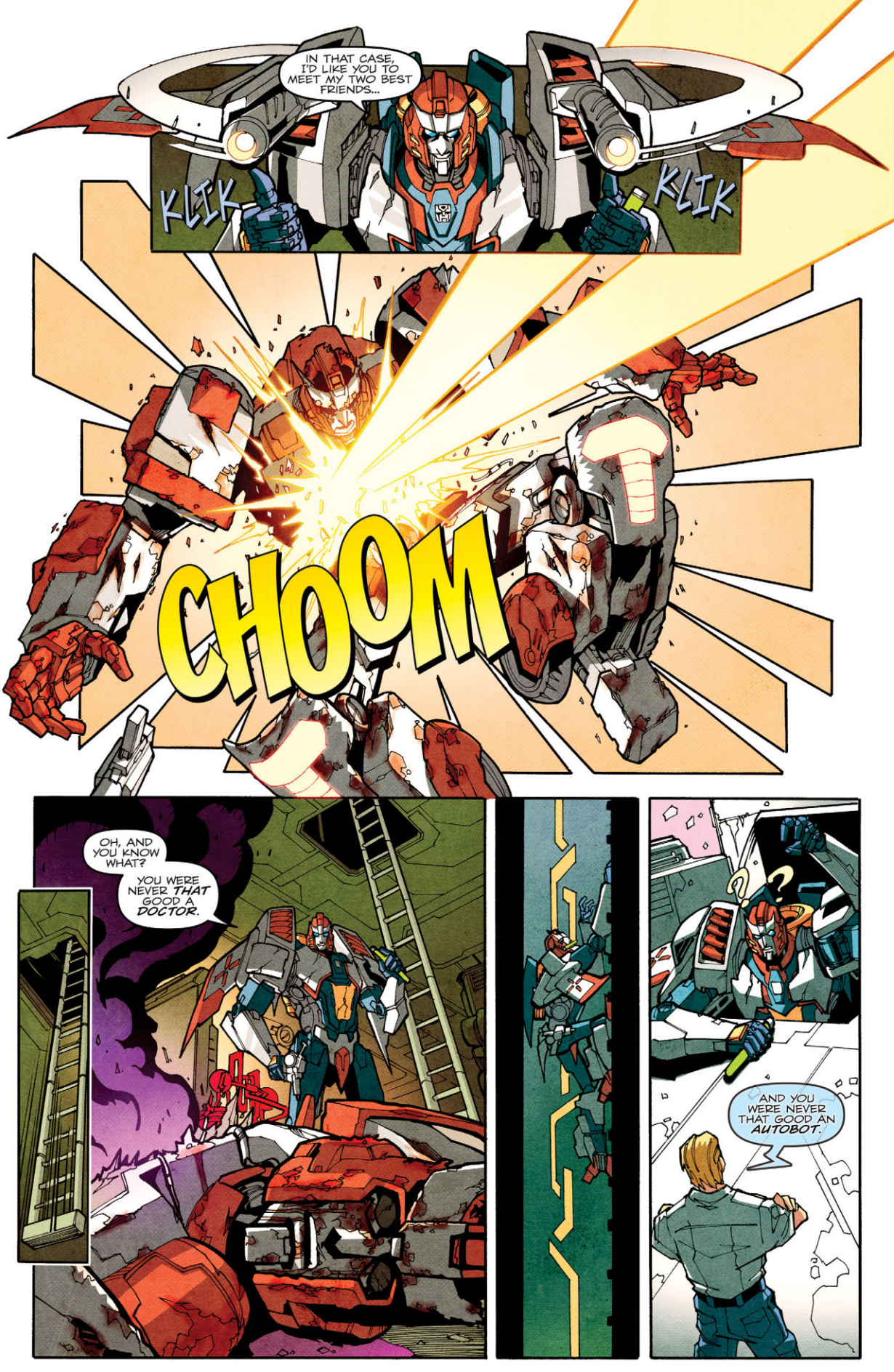
THERE YOU ARE. FINALLY.
I WAS GIVING YOU TWO MORE MINUTES.
DRAMATIC ESCAPES ARE WORTHLESS WITHOUT WITNESSES.
I'M UNARMED, PHARMA, SO YOU CAN PUT DOWN THE—
LOOK—EVEN MY WRISTS ARE EMPTY.
I'VE COME HERE AS YOUR FRIEND TO TALK SOME SENSE INTO YOU.
OH, RATCHET—IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE ANYONE TRIED TO DO THAT.
AND FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, YOU'RE MY FRIEND, TOO.
AW, I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE YOU CRY.
HUH.
I WONDERED WHY I COULD TASTE THE BACK OF MY EYES IN MY MOUTH.
DON'T WORRY, THIS WON'T TAKE LONG.
SEE, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I DID WHAT I DID. 'COS I THINK YOU'LL GET IT. OTHER PEOPLE, NOT SO MUCH, BUT YOU...
WE'RE BOTH DOCTORS, RIGHT? WE KNOW ALL ABOUT LIFE-AND-DEATH CHOICES.


RATCHET—HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY DELPHI IS STILL STANDING?
OR HOW WE'RE ABLE TO FIX ALL THE AUTOBOTS WHO GET INJURED DEFENDING THE NUCLEON MINES, DESPITE THE DECEPTICON JUSTICE DIVISION MAKING THIS PLANET THEIR HOME?
THE D.J.D. COULD WIPE US OUT IN SECONDS—THEY *COULD!* BUT THEY DON'T. AND THEY DON'T BECAUSE OF ME.
I'M *LISTENING.*
I'M ALSO THINKING OF A WAY TO *PURGE* THE VIRUS FROM MY SYSTEM, GRAB A *BLUNT OBJECT,* AND *BEAT* THE SMILE OFF YOUR SMUG, TRAITOROUS FACE.
JUST SO WE'RE CLEAR.
WELL, *THAT'S* NOT VERY FRIENDLY, IS IT?
LISTEN: THE D.J.D. IGNORE US IN EXCHANGE FOR A REGULAR DONATION: *TRANSFORMATION COGS.*
THE LEADER OF THE D.J.D. IS *ADDICTED* TO CHANGING SHAPE. HE'S BURNT THROUGH *HUNDREDS* OF COGS.
IT'S A RARE CONDITION—BUT *TREATABLE.*
YEAH, EXCEPT HE DOESN'T *WANT* TO BE TREATED—HE JUST WANTS THE NEXT *HIT.*
SO—WAIT—YOU *HARVEST ORGANS* ON BEHALF OF THE D.J.D.?
IN THE BEGINNING, IT WAS JUST PATIENTS WHO—DESPITE MY BEST EFFORTS—HAD DIED ON THE WARD.
BUT DEMAND *INCREASED.*
YOU STARTED KILLING YOUR PATIENTS.

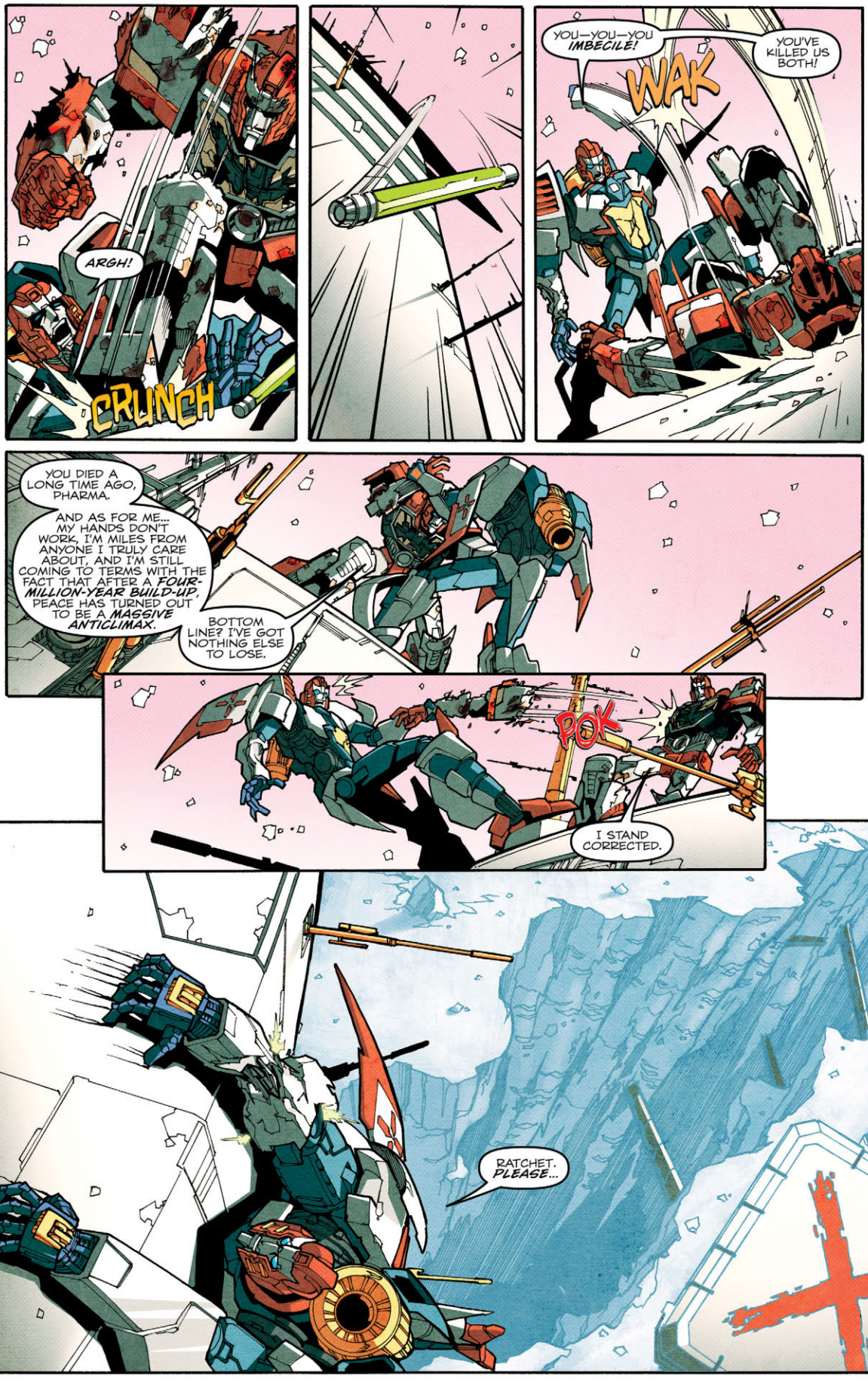

"I MADE JUDGMENTS BASED ON THEIR CHANCES OF SURVIVAL. SOMETIMES I LET THEM SLIP AWAY.
"SOMETIMES—IF THEY REALLY WERE CLINGING TO LIFE—I HELPED THEM RELAX THEIR GRIP.
"BUT THE QUOTA KEPT INCREASING, AND PROWL KEPT SENDING NEW AUTOBOTS TO DEFEND THE NUCLEON MINES..."
"YOU COULD'VE CLOSED DELPHI, OR REQUESTED A TRANSFER, OR—OR JUST RUN AWAY."
"THERE WOULD'VE BEEN TOO MANY QUESTIONS. I HAD TO DO SOMETHING THAT WOULD FORCE HIGH COMMAND TO SHUT US DOWN WITHOUT IMPLICATING ME. I HAD TO ENGINEER A PLAGUE.
"I FOUND TWO DECEPTICON NONENTITIES AND PAID THEM TO PLAY THE VICTIM. ONCE INSIDE DELPHI, THEY DETONATED A BOMB."
"HOW? I THOUGHT THEY WERE LOCKED UP IN THEIR CELLS."
"THEIR CELL. AMBULON LET THEM SHARE.
"THEY WERE COMBINERS. ONE WAS CALLED SONIC AND THE OTHER—YOU'LL LIKE THIS—THE OTHER WAS CALLED BOOM. AND AT A PREARRANGED TIME, WHEN THE COAST WAS CLEAR, THEY LIVED UP TO THEIR NAMES.
"FIND THE RIGHT FREQUENCY AND VOLUME, AND YOU CAN PULL A CYBERTRONIAN APART FROM THE INSIDE. I HAD THE DECEPTICONS DETONATE A SOUNDBOMB I INVENTED—AN ECHO LACED WITH A VIRUS."
EVERYONE WHO HEARD THE BOMB GOT INFECTED.
AND THEN, WHEN THEY NEXT CHANGED SHAPE, THE COOLANTS AND THE DISPERSANTS AND THE ANTI-RUSTING AGENTS IN AND AROUND THEIR COG ALL CROSS-CONTAMINATED, TRIGGERING A SLOW MOLECULAR BREAKDOWN.
IT WAS LOUD AND IT WAS NASTY AND I WANT YOU TO ADMIT, RATCHET—I VERY MUCH WANT YOU TO ADMIT—THAT YOU'RE A TINY BIT IMPRESSED.

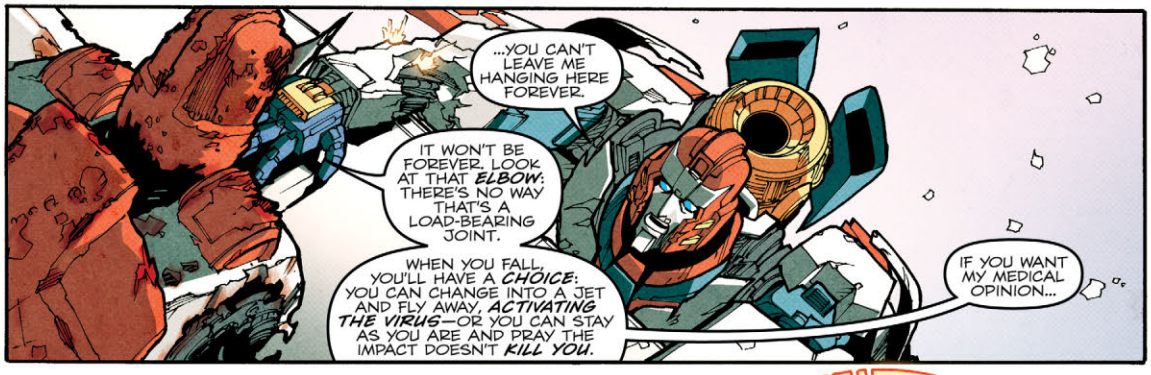

IMPRESSED? I'M APPALLED—BY YOUR STUPIDITY. YOU SHOULD'VE PAID THE DECEPTICONS TO DETONATE THE BOMB WITHIN EARSHOT OF THE D.J.D.!
THEY SAID IT WAS MORE THAN THEIR LIVES WERE WORTH TO EVEN TRY.
I STILL DON'T GET IT. THE PLAN WAS FOR SONIC AND BOOM TO RELEASE THE VIRUS—AND FOR YOU TO LOCK YOURSELF IN QUARANTINE?
"I'D INTENDED TO HIDE IN A C.R. CHAMBER, BUT THEY WERE ALL OCCUPIED. THE QUARANTINE ROOM WAS THE ONLY OTHER SOUNDPROOFED ENVIRONMENT. I THOUGHT I'D BE ABLE TO BREAK OUT.
"WHEN YOU SHOWED UP, I PANICKED. IF ANYONE COULD WORK OUT WHAT WAS REALLY GOING ON, IT WAS YOU. AFTER YOU FREED ME, I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ASK SONIC AND BOOM TO MURDER YOU—AND EVERYONE ELSE.
"YOU SHOULD TAKE THAT AS A COMPLIMENT."
PHARMA, I'VE BEEN HELD AT GUNPOINT BY THE BEST—MEGATRON, STARSCREAM, KILLMASTER—REMEMBER KILLMASTER? WITH THE WAND?—AND I'VE NEVER KNOWN ANYONE TAKE SO LONG TO EXPLAIN THEIR GRAND PLAN.
BUT I WANT TO THANK YOU. NOT ONLY HAVE YOU PROVED THAT YOU FULLY DESERVE WHAT'S COMING TO YOU, BUT YOU'VE GIVEN ME TIME TO FIGHT BACK.
FIGHT BACK? FIGHT BACK? YOU'RE FALLING APART!
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TOUCHED ME!
I'VE INFECTED YOU.
WHILE YOU'VE BEEN TALKING, I'VE BEEN CORRODING. I'VE SPRUNG A THOUSAND LEAKS. AND FOR THE LAST 34 SECONDS—
—YOU'VE BEEN STANDING IN MY RUST.

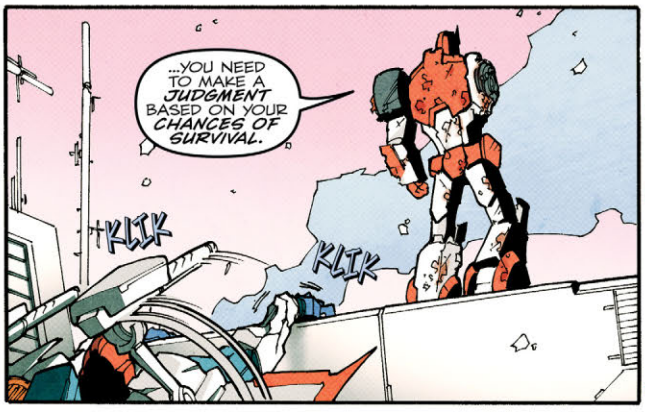

ARGH!
TOK
YEP—THAT FELT AS GOOD AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD.
STUPID! YOU DON'T THINK I CREATED A VACCINE IN CASE SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENED?
ACTUALLY, I WAS COUNTING ON IT. HAND IT OVER. SLOWLY.
AND IF I DON'T...?
EXCEPT YOU CAN'T DO IT, CAN YOU? YOU CAN'T SHOOT ME.
YOU CAN'T SHOOT ME BECAUSE KILLING AN UNARMED COMBATANT GOES AGAINST EVERY CIRCUIT IN YOUR BODY.
IF YOU MUST KNOW, I CAN'T SHOOT YOU BECAUSE MY TRIGGER FINGER ISN'T WORKING.

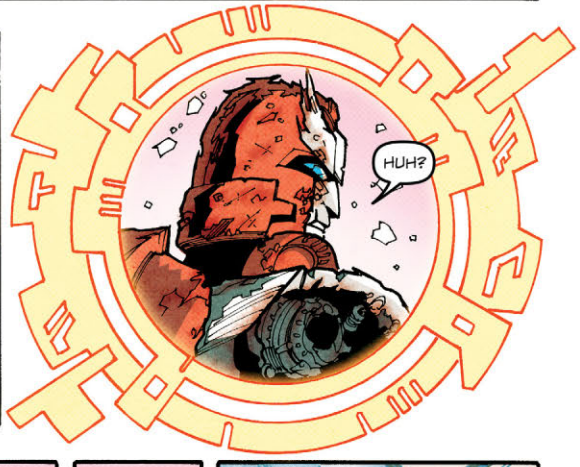

IN THAT CASE, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY TWO BEST FRIENDS...
KLIK
KLIK
CHOOM
OH, AND YOU KNOW WHAT?
YOU WERE NEVER THAT GOOD A DOCTOR.
?
AND YOU WERE NEVER THAT GOOD AN AUTOBOT.

RATCHET...?
A SOLID LIGHT AVATAR, YES.
FEELS DIFFERENT THIS TIME, THOUGH. I THINK THE TEMPLATE'S CORRUPTED.
YOU CAN SEE WHY REMOTE PROJECTION WENT OUT OF FASHION: IT'S ENERGY-INTENSIVE, IT DEMANDS TOTAL CONCENTRATION, AND THEY COULD NEVER GET THE HAIR TO LOOK REAL.
IN FACT THESE DAYS, THE ONLY THING IT'S GOOD FOR...
...IS KEEPING SIMPLETONS DISTRACTED!
NO!
THAT'S THE ONLY VACCINE!


ARGH!
CRUNCH
YOU—YOU—YOU IMBECILE!
WAK
YOU'VE KILLED US BOTH!
YOU DIED A LONG TIME AGO, PHARMA.
AND AS FOR ME.. MY HANDS DON'T WORK, I'M MILES FROM ANYONE I TRULY CARE ABOUT, AND I'M STILL COMING TO TERMS WITH THE FACT THAT AFTER A FOUR-MILLION-YEAR BUILD-UP, PEACE HAS TURNED OUT TO BE A MASSIVE ANTICLIMAX.
BOTTOM LINE? I'VE GOT NOTHING ELSE TO LOSE.
POK
I STAND CORRECTED.
RATCHET. PLEASE...

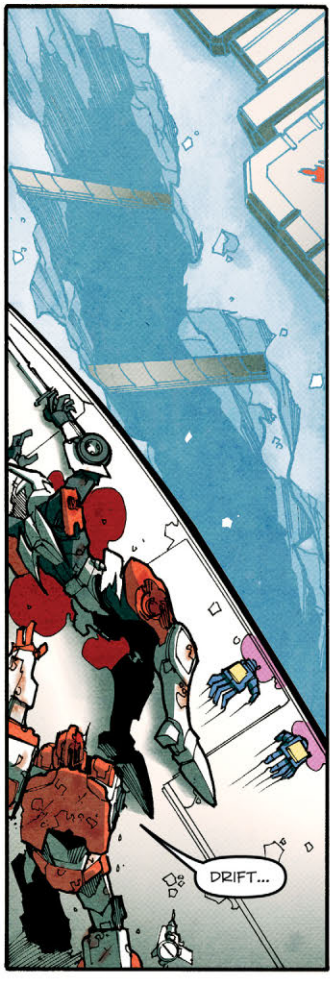

...YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME HANGING HERE FOREVER.
IT WON'T BE FOREVER. LOOK AT THAT ELBOW: THERE'S NO WAY THAT'S A LOAD-BEARING JOINT.
WHEN YOU FALL, YOU'LL HAVE A CHOICE: YOU CAN CHANGE INTO A JET AND FLY AWAY, ACTIVATING THE VIRUS—OR YOU CAN STAY AS YOU ARE AND PRAY THE IMPACT DOESN'T KILL YOU.
IF YOU WANT MY MEDICAL OPINION...

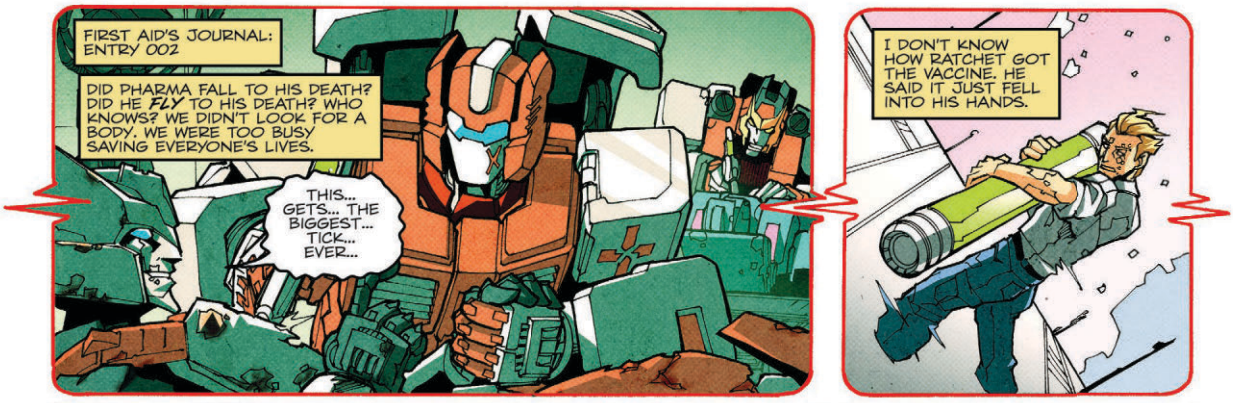

...YOU NEED TO MAKE A JUDGMENT BASED ON YOUR CHANCES OF SURVIVAL.
KLIK
KLIK


HUH?

NO!

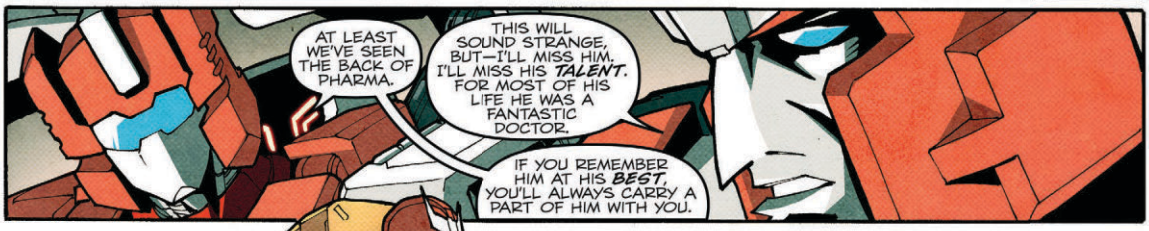
SLICK!


DRIFT...

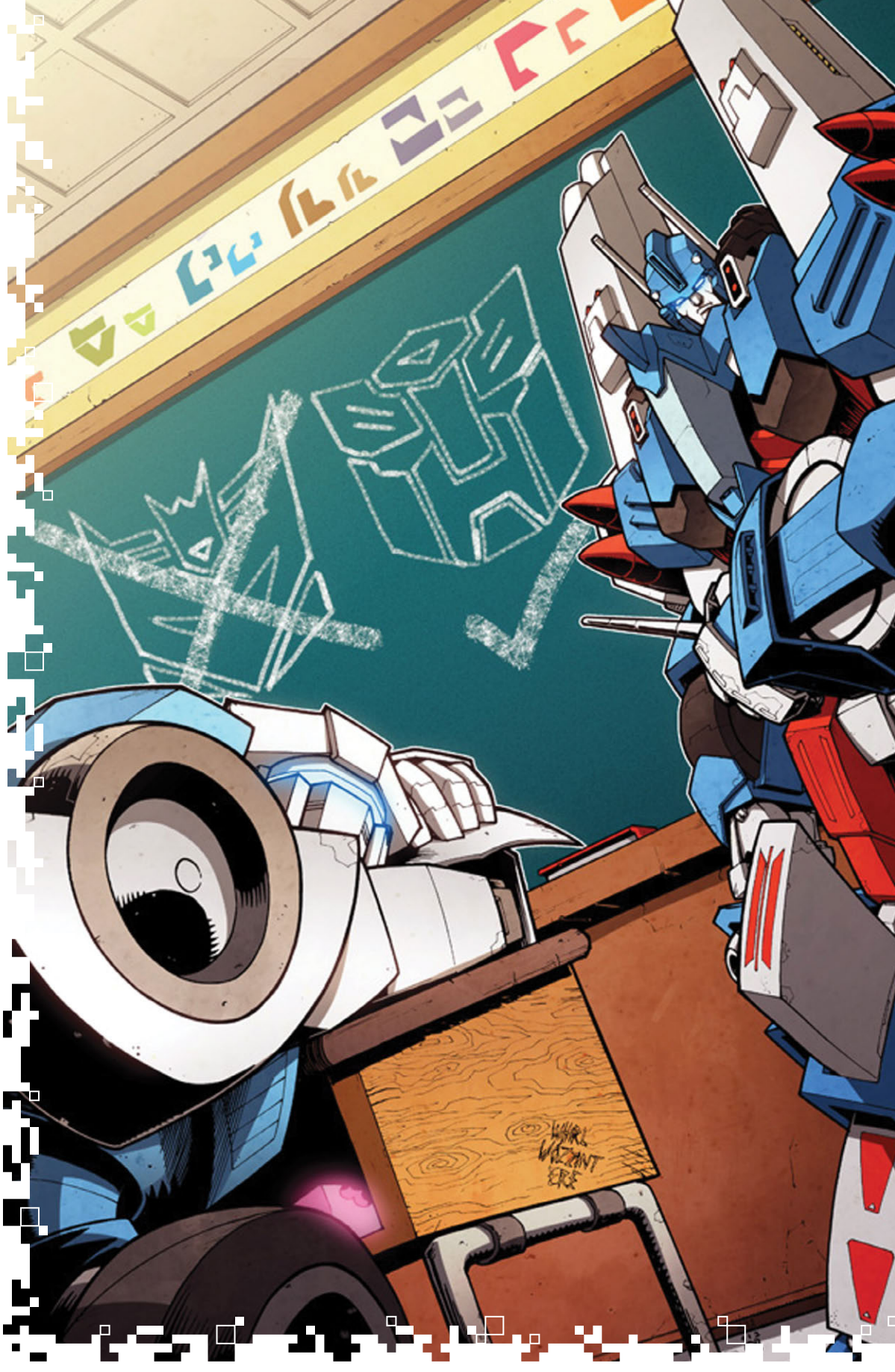

FIRST AID'S JOURNAL: ENTRY 002
DID PHARMA FALL TO HIS DEATH? DID HE *FLY* TO HIS DEATH? WHO KNOWS? WE DIDN'T LOOK FOR A BODY. WE WERE TOO BUSY SAVING EVERYONE'S LIVES.
THIS... GETS... THE BIGGEST... TICK... EVER...
I DON'T KNOW HOW RATCHET GOT THE VACCINE. HE SAID IT JUST FELL INTO HIS HANDS.

BUT IT WAS WHEN WE WERE ALL TRAVELING TO THE *LOST LIGHT* THAT RATCHET DROPPED HIS BOMBSHELL...
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER? *ME?*
IN *PRINCIPLE*, YES. YOU *IMPRESSED* ME BACK THERE. YOUR WORLD WAS FALLING APART BUT YOU TOOK CONTROL. YOU STAYED CALM AND PUT OTHERS BEFORE YOURSELF.
AND UNLESS I'M MISTAKEN, IT WAS YOU WHO SENT THE DATALOG—THE ONE THAT EXPOSED PHARMA'S *MALPRACTICE*.

HOW'D YOU GUESS?
SINCE WE'VE MET, YOU'VE BEEN QUOTING FISITRON—"LIFE PERSISTS" AND ALL THAT. YOU'RE A FAN OF THE *WRECKERS*.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHO WAS BEHIND THE HIGH DEATH RATES, BUT I HAD TO TELL *SOMEONE*. AS THE ONLY WRECKERS FAN ON DELPHI, THE *DATALOG NETWORK* SERVED AS A *SECURE FREQUENCY*.


AT LEAST WE'VE SEEN THE BACK OF PHARMA.
THIS WILL SOUND STRANGE, BUT—I'LL MISS HIM. I'LL MISS HIS *TALENT*. FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE HE WAS A FANTASTIC DOCTOR.
IF YOU REMEMBER HIM AT HIS *BEST*, YOU'LL ALWAYS CARRY A PART OF HIM WITH YOU.

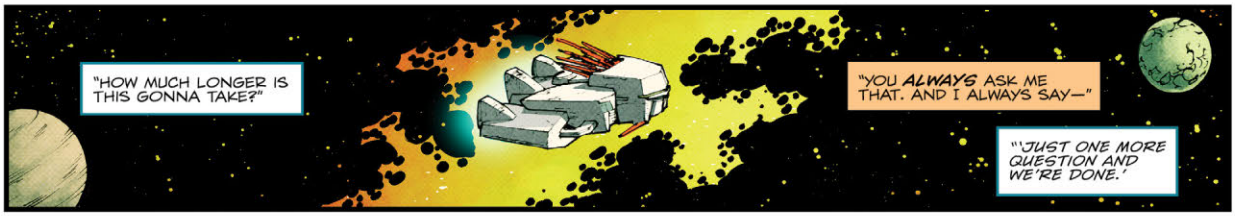
HOW RATCHET GOT HIS HANDS BACK



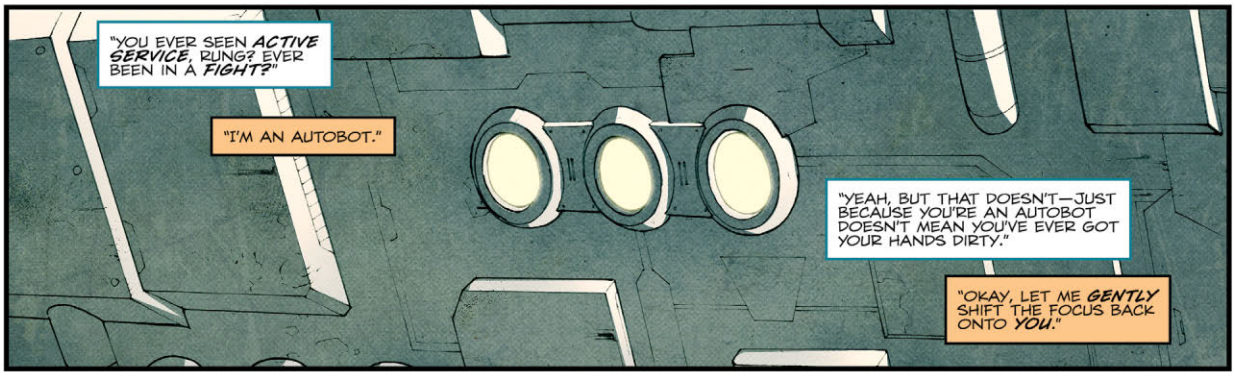
□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #5 COVER B
BY **NICK ROCHE** COLORS BY **JOANA LAFUENTE**

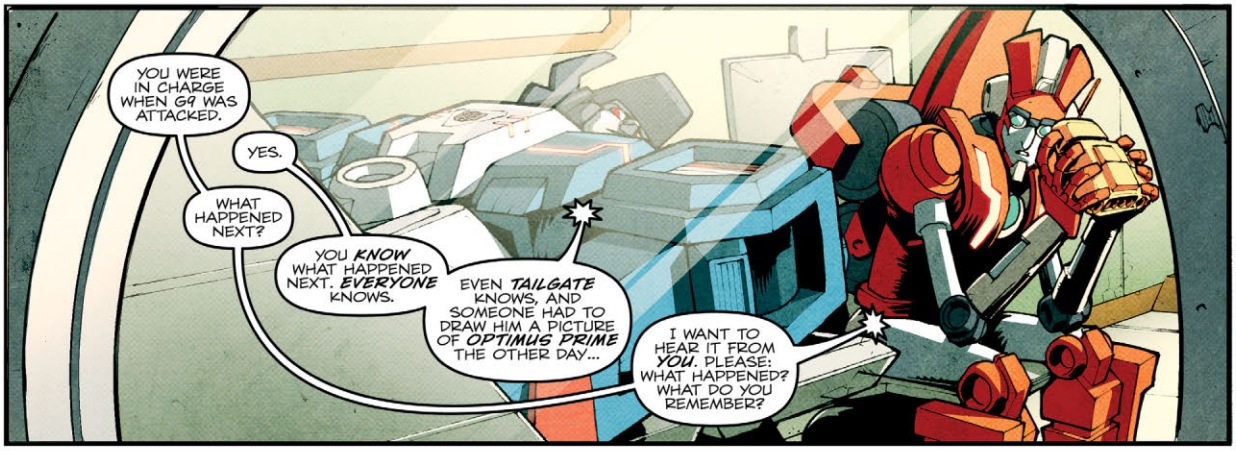
□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #6 COVER A

BY **ALEX MILNE** COLORS BY **JOSH PEREZ**

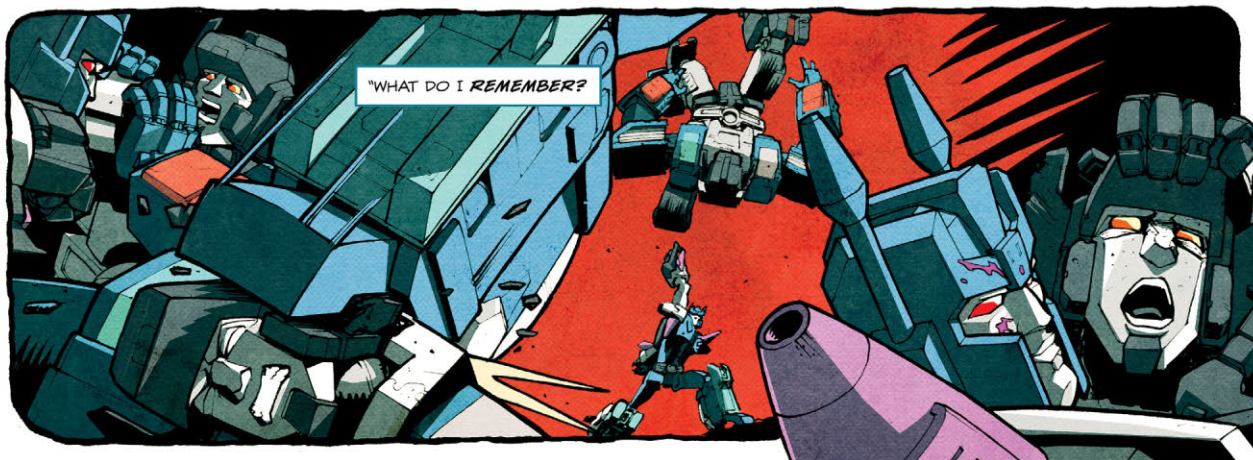

"HOW MUCH LONGER IS THIS GONNA TAKE?"
"YOU ALWAYS ASK ME THAT. AND I ALWAYS SAY—"
"'JUST ONE MORE QUESTION AND WE'RE DONE.'

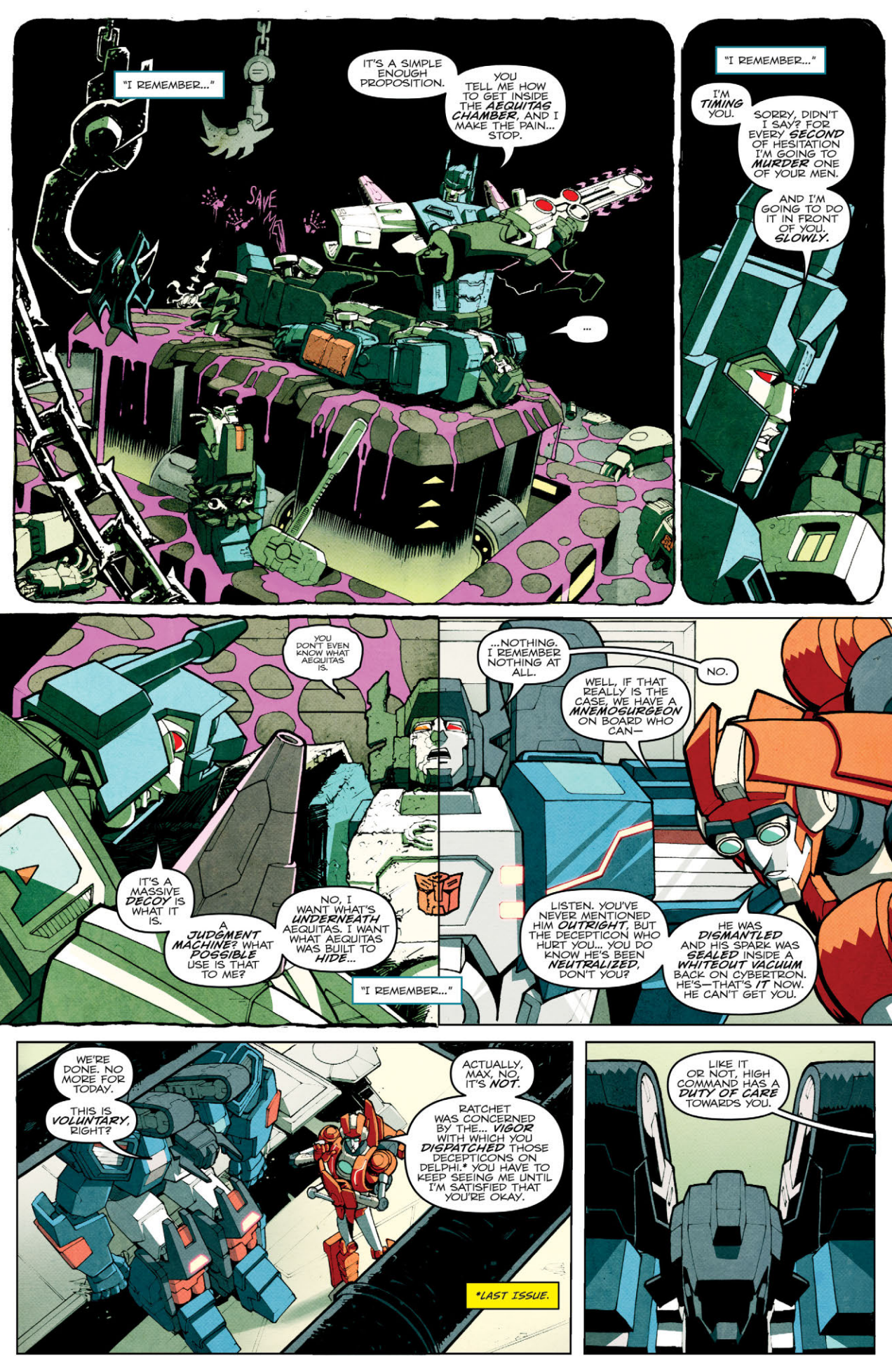
"GO ON, THEN: ONE MORE QUESTION. SO LONG AS IT'S NOT ABOUT G9."
"FORTRESS MAXIMUS, GARRUS 9 CHANGED EVERYTHING—FOR YOU AND FOR ME. IT'S THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EQUIVALENT OF GROUND ZERO.
"WE CAN'T KEEP DODGING THIS."

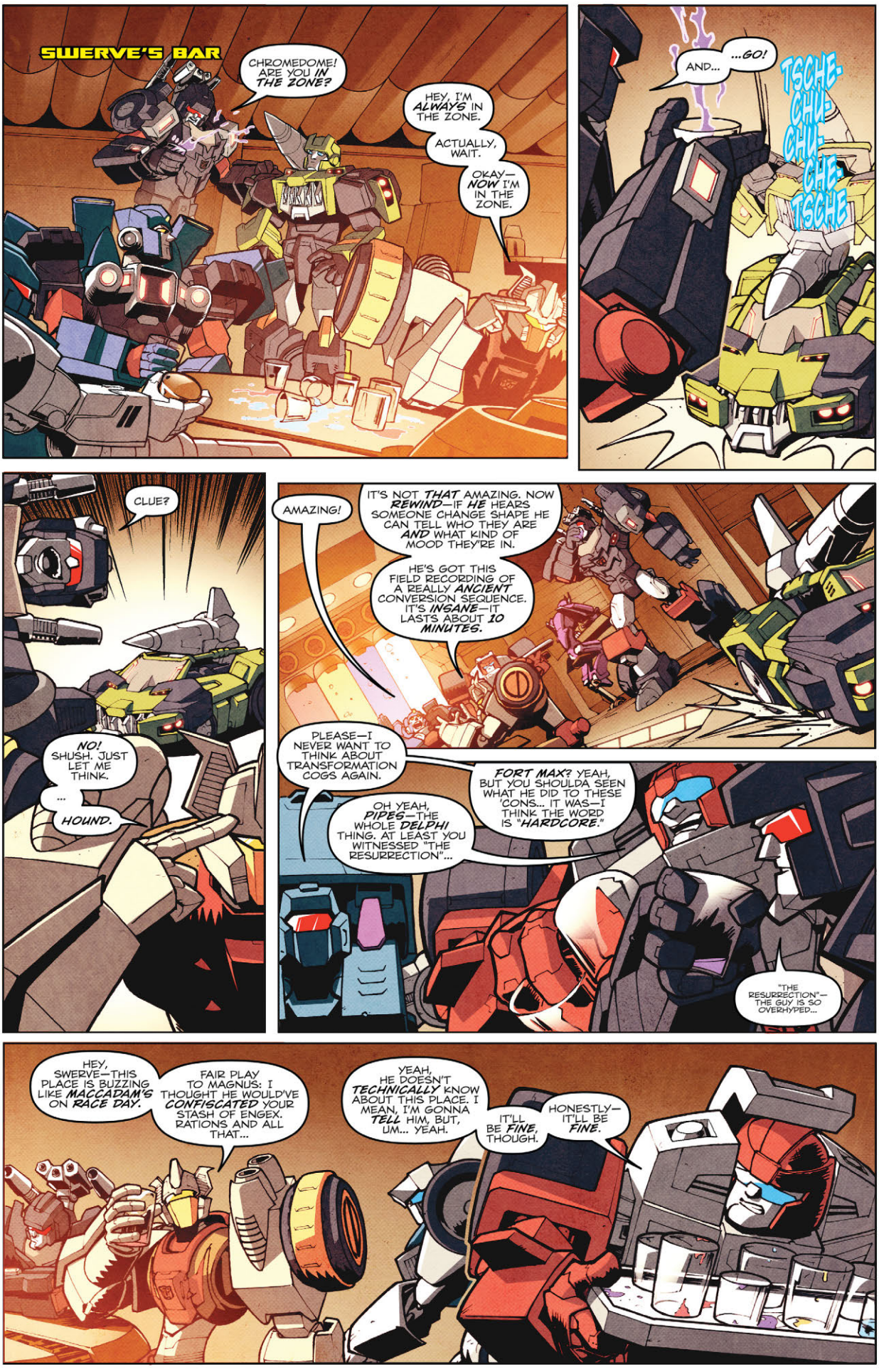

"YOU EVER SEEN ACTIVE SERVICE, RUNG? EVER BEEN IN A FIGHT?"
"I'M AN AUTOBOT."
"YEAH, BUT THAT DOESN'T—JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE AN AUTOBOT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'VE EVER GOT YOUR HANDS DIRTY."
"OKAY, LET ME GENTLY SHIFT THE FOCUS BACK ONTO YOU."


YOU WERE IN CHARGE WHEN G9 WAS ATTACKED.
YES.
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?
YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED NEXT. EVERYONE KNOWS.
EVEN TAILGATE KNOWS, AND SOMEONE HAD TO DRAW HIM A PICTURE OF OPTIMUS PRIME THE OTHER DAY...
I WANT TO HEAR IT FROM YOU. PLEASE: WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

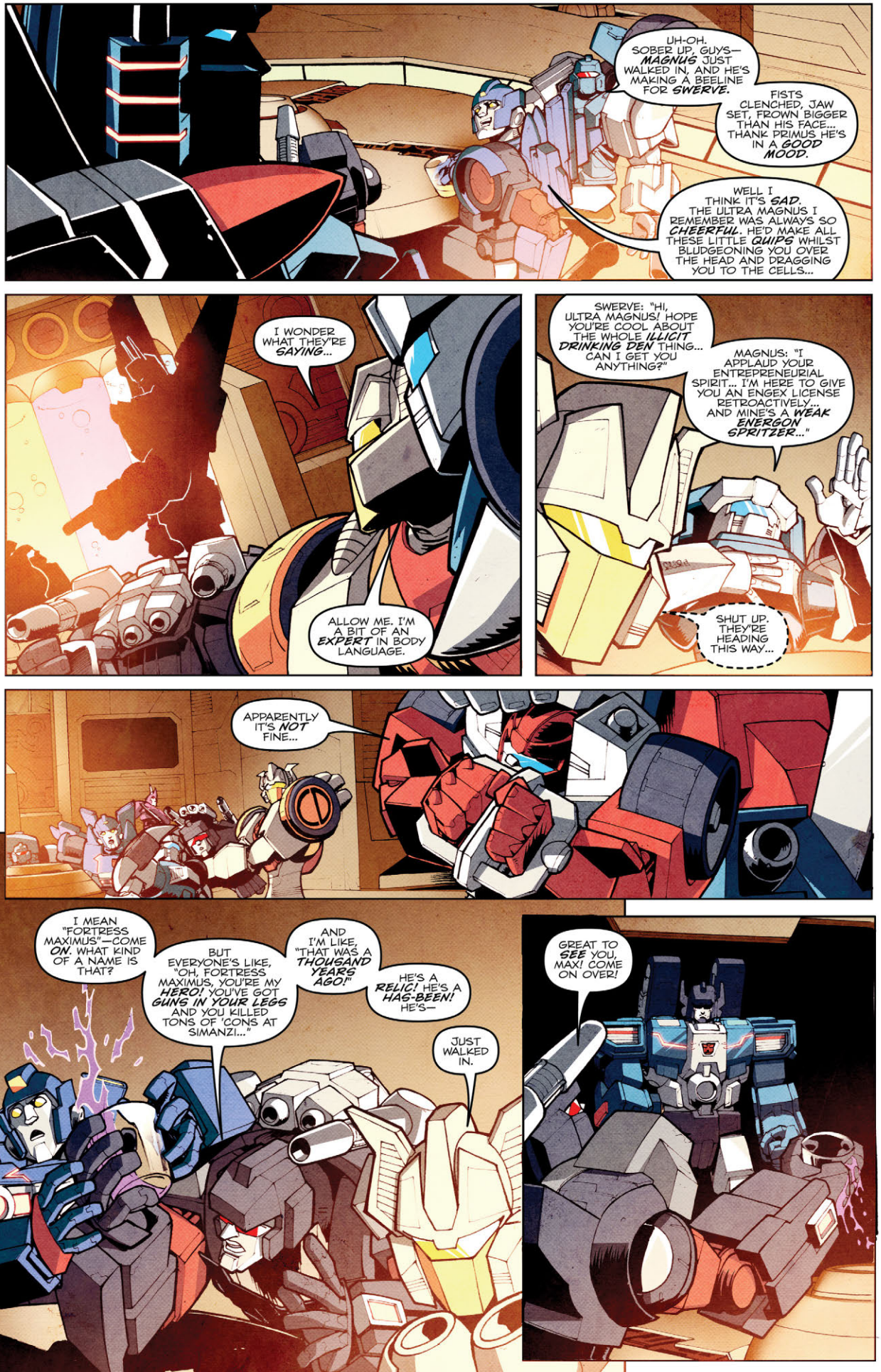
INTERIORS


"WHAT DO I REMEMBER?

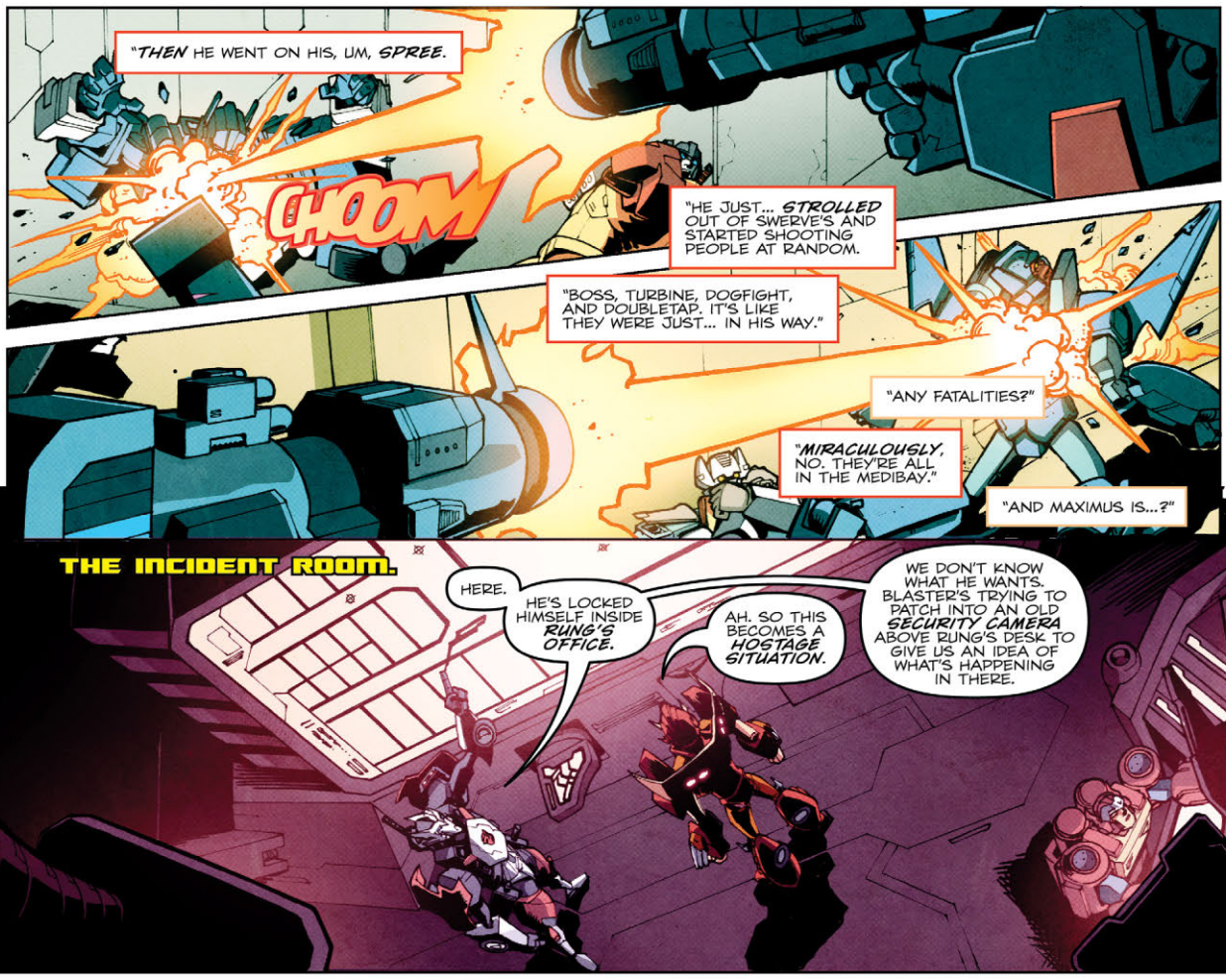

"I REMEMBER..."
IT'S A SIMPLE ENOUGH PROPOSITION.
YOU TELL ME HOW TO GET INSIDE THE AEQUITAS CHAMBER, AND I MAKE THE PAIN... STOP.
SAVE ME
...
"I REMEMBER..."
I'M TIMING YOU.
SORRY, DIDN'T I SAY? FOR EVERY SECOND OF HESITATION I'M GOING TO MURDER ONE OF YOUR MEN.
AND I'M GOING TO DO IT IN FRONT OF YOU, SLOWLY.
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT AEQUITAS IS.
IT'S A MASSIVE DECOY IS WHAT IT IS.
A JUDGMENT MACHINE? WHAT POSSIBLE USE IS THAT TO ME?
NO, I WANT WHAT'S UNDERNEATH AEQUITAS. I WANT WHAT AEQUITAS WAS BUILT TO HIDE...
"I REMEMBER..."
...NOTHING. I REMEMBER NOTHING AT ALL.
NO.
WELL, IF THAT REALLY IS THE CASE, WE HAVE A MNEMOSURGEON ON BOARD WHO CAN—
LISTEN. YOU'VE NEVER MENTIONED HIM OUTRIGHT, BUT THE DECEPTICON WHO HURT YOU... YOU DO KNOW HE'S BEEN NEUTRALIZED, DON'T YOU?
HE WAS DISMANTLED AND HIS SPARK WAS SEALED INSIDE A WHITEOUT VACUUM BACK ON CYBERTRON. HE'S—THAT'S IT NOW. HE CAN'T GET YOU.
WE'RE DONE. NO MORE FOR TODAY.
THIS IS VOLUNTARY, RIGHT?
ACTUALLY, MAX, NO, IT'S NOT.
RATCHET WAS CONCERNED BY THE... VIGOR WITH WHICH YOU DISPATCHED THOSE DECEPTICONS ON DELPHI.* YOU HAVE TO KEEP SEEING ME UNTIL I'M SATISFIED THAT YOU'RE OKAY.
*LAST ISSUE.
LIKE IT OR NOT, HIGH COMMAND HAS A DUTY OF CARE TOWARDS YOU.

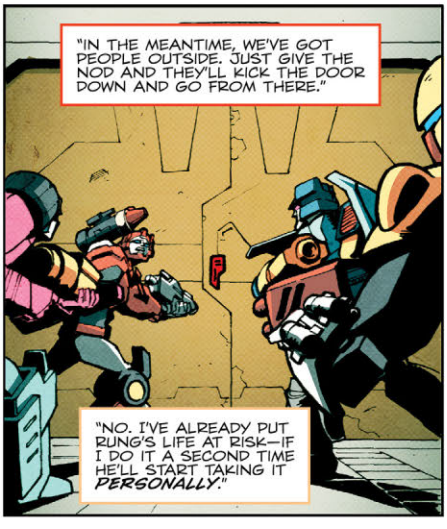

SWERVE'S BAR
CHROMEDOME! ARE YOU IN THE ZONE?
HEY, I'M ALWAYS IN THE ZONE.
ACTUALLY, WAIT.
OKAY—NOW I'M IN THE ZONE.
AND...
...GO!
TSCHE-CHU-CHU-CHE-TSCHE
CLUE?
NO! SHUSH. JUST LET ME THINK.
...
HOUND.
AMAZING!
IT'S NOT THAT AMAZING. NOW REWIND—IF HE HEARS SOMEONE CHANGE SHAPE HE CAN TELL WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT KIND OF MOOD THEY'RE IN.
HE'S GOT THIS FIELD RECORDING OF A REALLY ANCIENT CONVERSION SEQUENCE. IT'S INSANE—IT LASTS ABOUT 10 MINUTES.
PLEASE—I NEVER WANT TO THINK ABOUT TRANSFORMATION COGS AGAIN.
OH YEAH, PIPES—THE WHOLE DELPHI THING. AT LEAST YOU WITNESSED "THE RESURRECTION"...
FORT MAX? YEAH, BUT YOU SHOULDA SEEN WHAT HE DID TO THESE 'CONS... IT WAS—I THINK THE WORD IS "HARDCORE."
"THE RESURRECTION"—THE GUY IS SO OVERHYPED...
HEY, SWERVE—THIS PLACE IS BUZZING LIKE MACCADAM'S ON RACE DAY.
FAIR PLAY TO MAGNUS: I THOUGHT HE WOULD'VE CONFISCATED YOUR STASH OF ENGEX. RATIONS AND ALL THAT...
YEAH, HE DOESN'T TECHNICALLY KNOW ABOUT THIS PLACE. I MEAN, I'M GONNA TELL HIM, BUT, UM... YEAH.
IT'LL BE FINE, THOUGH.
HONESTLY—IT'LL BE FINE.

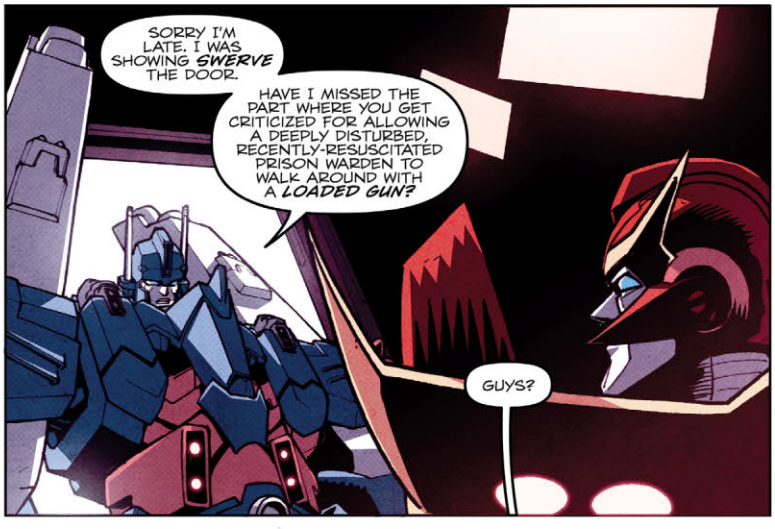
HEY, TAILGATE.
EXCUSE ME—IS THIS A GOOD PLACE TO SIT DOWN AND DIE?
TINY ANCIENT DUDE! WHASSUP?
LET ME GUESS: MAGNUS IS TAKING YOU THROUGH THE UNABRIDGED VERSION OF THE AUTOBOT CODE.
WE JUST SPENT SIX HOURS DISCUSSING THE RELEVANCE OF A SEMICOLON.
I SAY "DISCUSSING"—IT WAS MORE LIKE A THRILLING MAGNUS MONOLOGUE.
I SAY "THRILLING"—IT WAS ACTUALLY VERY, VERY BORING.
AND THE SEMICOLON?
AH! TURNS OUT THE SEMICOLON ISN'T RELEVANT AT ALL.
THANK GOODNESS DRIFT BURST IN TO TELL MAGNUS HIS NEW THEORY ABOUT THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON. HE THINKS THEY FEED OFF SKEPTICISM: THEY ONLY EXIST BECAUSE PEOPLE DOUBT THEY EXIST, AND—
WAITAMINUTE.
THERE'S AN ABRIDGED VERSION?
SAW YOU TALKING TO CYCLONUS OVER THERE...
YEAH, I WAS GONNA INVITE HIM OVER. HE SEEMED KINDA LONELY.
I DON'T WANT HIM SHARING A TABLE WITH ME, THAT MURDERING PIECE OF—
ANYWAY, IT DOESN'T MATTER...
"...HE SAID HE WAS FINE BY HIMSELF."
DROP DEAD, TAILGATE.
WHERE'S REWIND, ANYWAY?
OUTSIDE.
I KEEP MEANING TO ASK HOW YOU TWO MET.
"IT'S A LONG STORY."
RELINQUISHMENT CLINIC
"LONG STORY AS IN LONG STORY, OR AS IN NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS?"
"EITHER WORKS FOR ME."

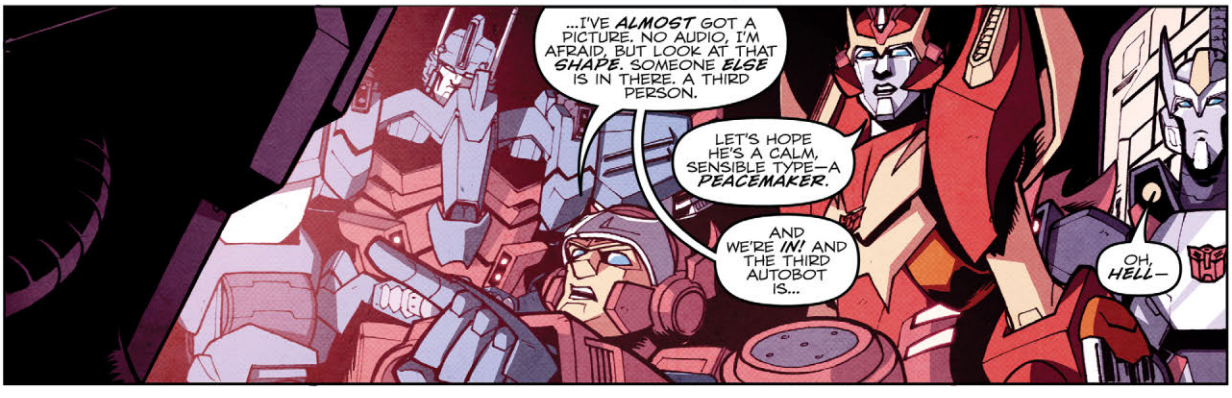

UH-OH. SOBER UP, GUYS— MAGNUS JUST WALKED IN, AND HE'S MAKING A BEELINE FOR SWERVE.
FISTS CLENCHED, JAW SET, FROWN BIGGER THAN HIS FACE... THANK PRIMUS HE'S IN A GOOD MOOD.
WELL I THINK IT'S SAD. THE ULTRA MAGNUS I REMEMBER WAS ALWAYS SO CHEERFUL. HE'D MAKE ALL THESE LITTLE QUIPS WHILST BLUDGEONING YOU OVER THE HEAD AND DRAGGING YOU TO THE CELLS...
I WONDER WHAT THEY'RE SAYING...
ALLOW ME. I'M A BIT OF AN EXPERT IN BODY LANGUAGE.
SWERVE: "HI, ULTRA MAGNUS! HOPE YOU'RE COOL ABOUT THE WHOLE ILLICIT DRINKING DEN THING... CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?"
MAGNUS: "I APPLAUD YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT... I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU AN ENGEX LICENSE RETROACTIVELY... AND MINE'S A WEAK ENERGON SPRITZER..."
SHUT UP. THEY'RE HEADING THIS WAY...
APPARENTLY IT'S NOT FINE...
I MEAN "FORTRESS MAXIMUS"—COME ON. WHAT KIND OF A NAME IS THAT?
BUT EVERYONE'S LIKE, "OH, FORTRESS MAXIMUS, YOU'RE MY HERO! YOU'VE GOT GUNS IN YOUR LEGS AND YOU KILLED TONS OF 'CONS AT SIMANZI..."
AND I'M LIKE, "THAT WAS A THOUSAND YEARS AGO!"
HE'S A RELIC! HE'S A HAS-BEEN! HE'S—
JUST WALKED IN.
GREAT TO SEE YOU, MAX! COME ON OVER!

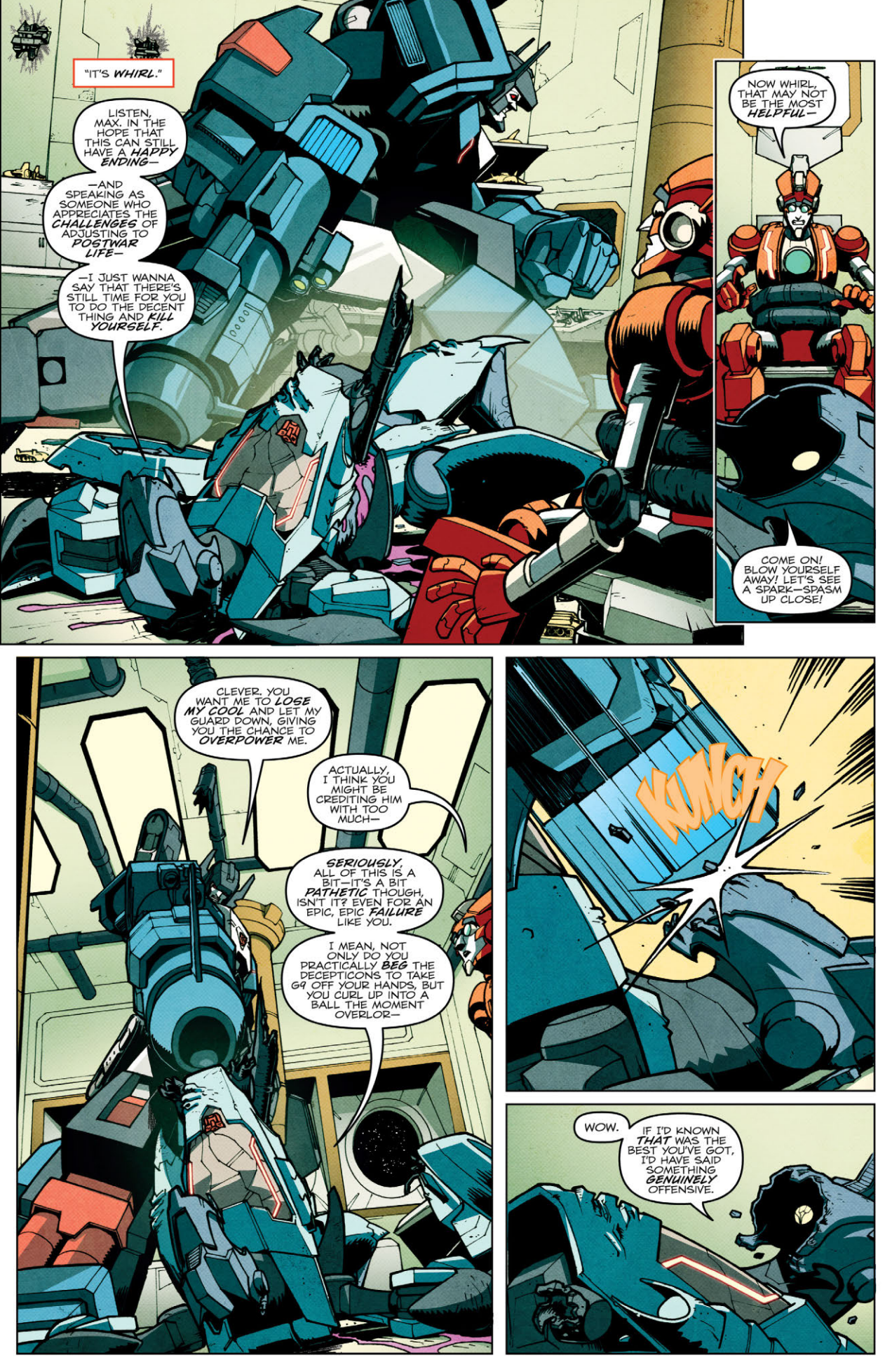
WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT *SIMANZI!* WITH THE *THING* AND THE—THE *STUFF!*
SO...
OH *WOW!* YOU'VE GOT GUNS IN YOUR *LEGS!* HOW'S THAT WORKING OUT FOR YOU?
THAT'S *AWESOME*, MAN. *YOU'RE* AWESOME.
I'M *CONFUSED*, TRAILBREAKER. YOU JUST SAID THAT FORTRESS MAXIMUS WAS A—
OW!
SORRY! FORCEFIELD MALFUNCTION.
ER, MAX? YOU OKAY?
HE'S *FINE!*
YOU'RE *FINE*, AREN'T YOU?
AREN'T YOU? FINE?
FINE? YOU?
HELP ME *OUT*, MAN—THERE'S ONLY SO MANY WAYS I CAN ASK THE QUESTION...
CHOOM
PIPES!
"AND *THEN* WHAT HAPPENED?"


"THEN HE WENT ON HIS, UM, SPREE.
CHOOM
"HE JUST... STROLLED OUT OF SWERVE'S AND STARTED SHOOTING PEOPLE AT RANDOM.
"BOSS, TURBINE, DOGFIGHT, AND DOUBLETAP. IT'S LIKE THEY WERE JUST... IN HIS WAY."
"ANY FATALITIES?"
"MIRACULOUSLY, NO. THEY'RE ALL IN THE MEDIBAY."
"AND MAXIMUS IS...?"
THE INCIDENT ROOM.
HERE.
HE'S LOCKED HIMSELF INSIDE RUNG'S OFFICE.
AH. SO THIS BECOMES A HOSTAGE SITUATION.
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HE WANTS. BLASTER'S TRYING TO PATCH INTO AN OLD SECURITY CAMERA ABOVE RUNG'S DESK TO GIVE US AN IDEA OF WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THERE.


"IN THE MEANTIME, WE'VE GOT PEOPLE OUTSIDE. JUST GIVE THE NOD AND THEY'LL KICK THE DOOR DOWN AND GO FROM THERE."
"NO. I'VE ALREADY PUT RUNG'S LIFE AT RISK—IF I DO IT A SECOND TIME HE'LL START TAKING IT PERSONALLY."

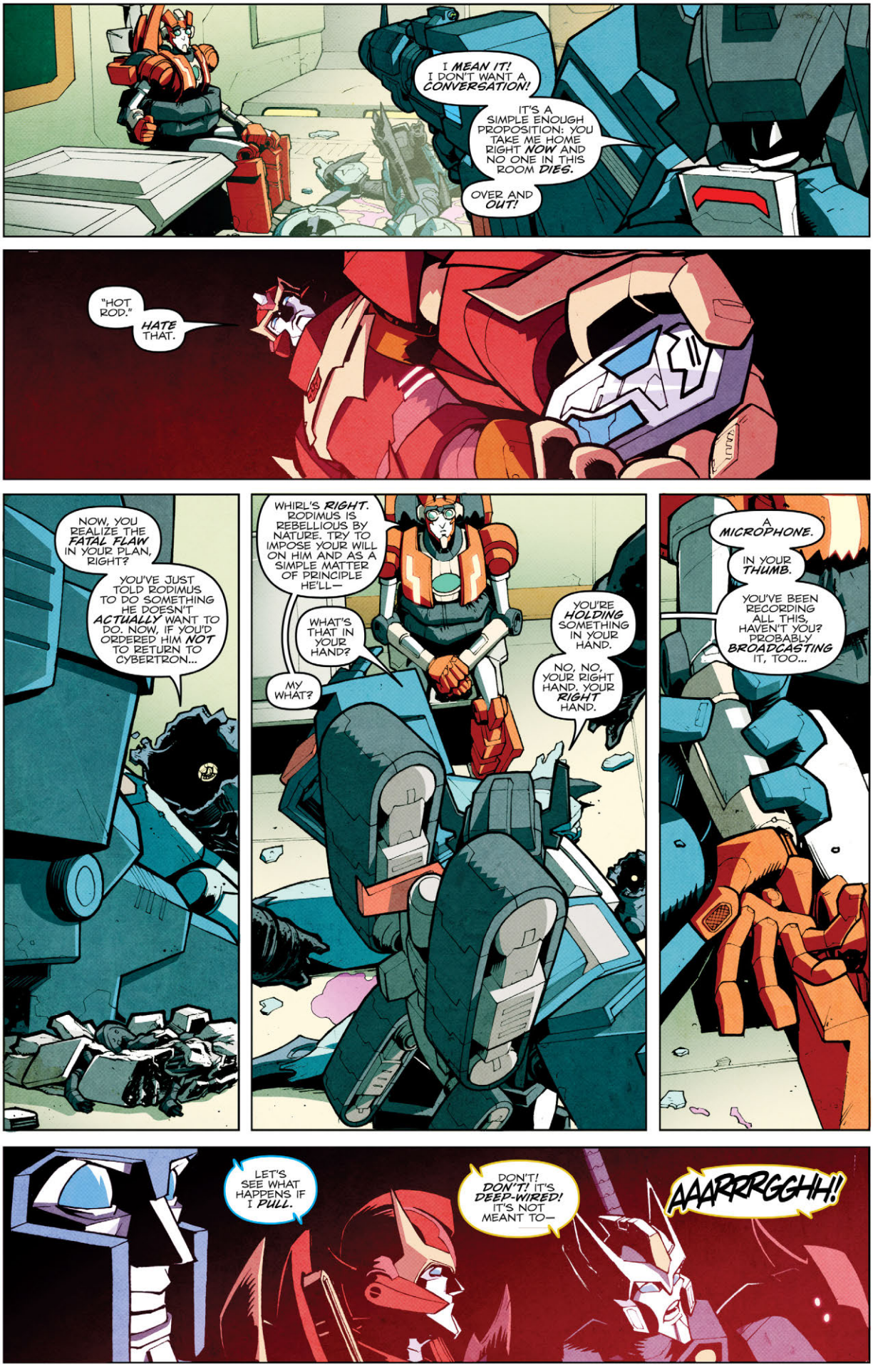

SORRY I'M LATE. I WAS SHOWING SWERVE THE DOOR.
HAVE I MISSED THE PART WHERE YOU GET CRITICIZED FOR ALLOWING A DEEPLY DISTURBED, RECENTLY-RESUSCITATED PRISON WARDEN TO WALK AROUND WITH A LOADED GUN?
GUYS?

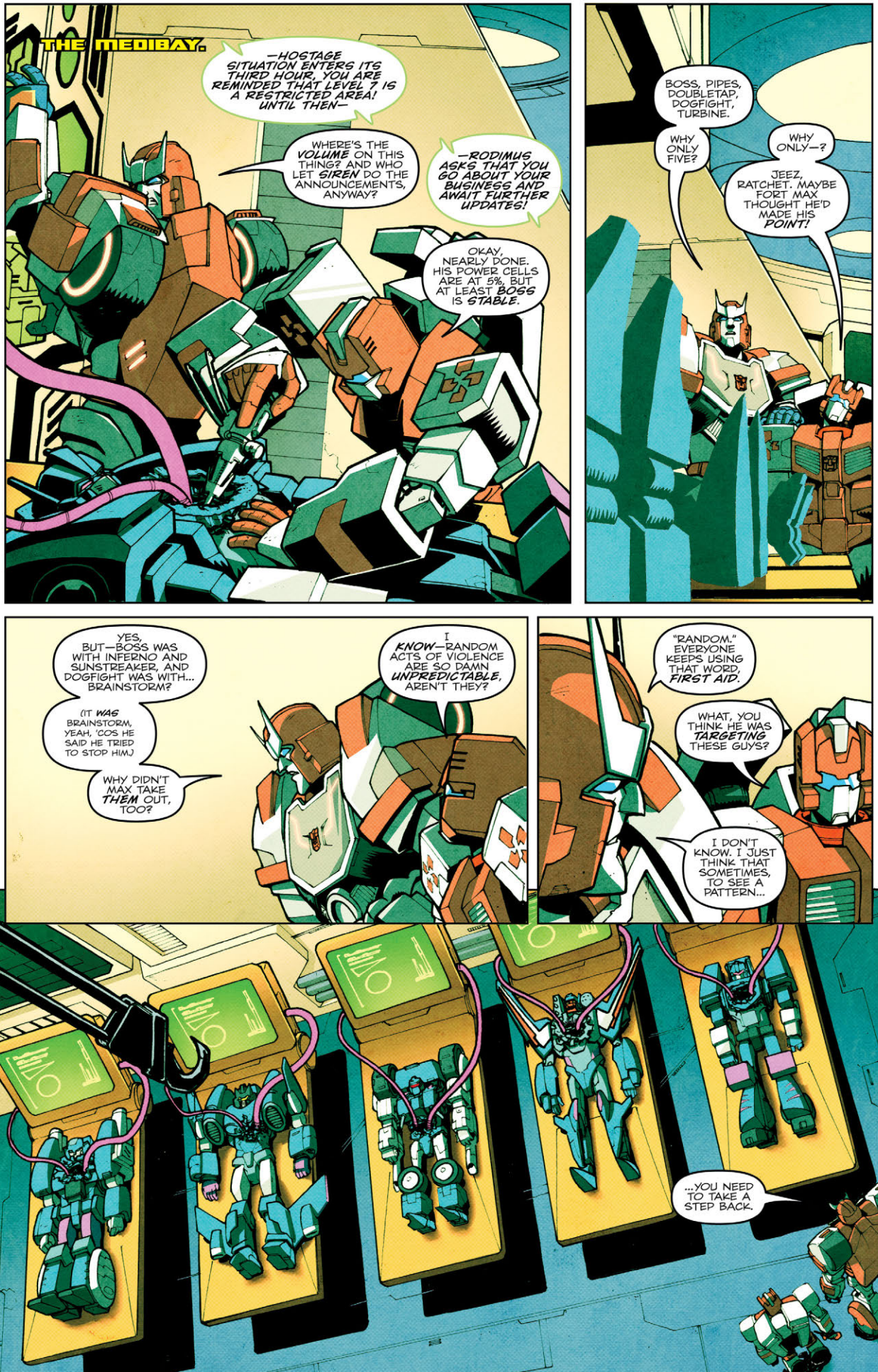

...I'VE ALMOST GOT A PICTURE. NO AUDIO, I'M AFRAID, BUT LOOK AT THAT SHAPE. SOMEONE ELSE IS IN THERE. A THIRD PERSON.
LET'S HOPE HE'S A CALM, SENSIBLE TYPE—A PEACEMAKER.
AND WE'RE IN! AND THE THIRD AUTOBOT IS...
OH, HELL—

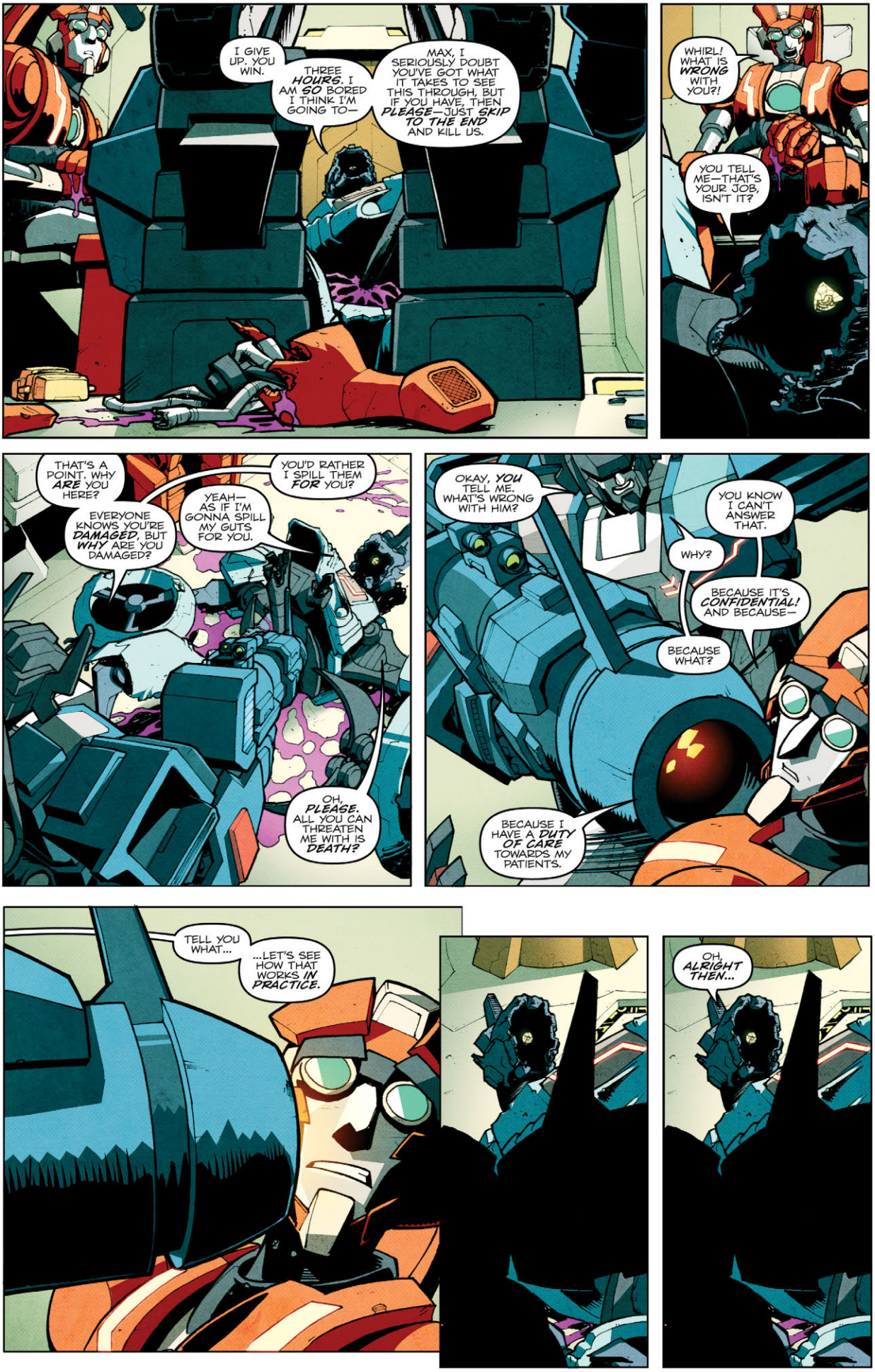

"IT'S WHIRL."
LISTEN, MAX. IN THE HOPE THAT THIS CAN STILL HAVE A HAPPY ENDING—
—AND SPEAKING AS SOMEONE WHO APPRECIATES THE CHALLENGES OF ADJUSTING TO POSTWAR LIFE—
—I JUST WANNA SAY THAT THERE'S STILL TIME FOR YOU TO DO THE DECENT THING AND KILL YOURSELF.
NOW WHIRL, THAT MAY NOT BE THE MOST HELPFUL—
COME ON! BLOW YOURSELF AWAY! LET'S SEE A SPARK—SPASM UP CLOSE!
CLEVER. YOU WANT ME TO LOSE MY COOL AND LET MY GUARD DOWN, GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO OVERPOWER ME.
ACTUALLY, I THINK YOU MIGHT BE CREDITING HIM WITH TOO MUCH—
SERIOUSLY, ALL OF THIS IS A BIT—IT'S A BIT PATHETIC THOUGH, ISN'T IT? EVEN FOR AN EPIC, EPIC FAILURE LIKE YOU.
I MEAN, NOT ONLY DO YOU PRACTICALLY BEG THE DECEPTICONS TO TAKE G9 OFF YOUR HANDS, BUT YOU CURL UP INTO A BALL THE MOMENT OVERLOR—
KUNCH
WOW.
IF I'D KNOWN THAT WAS THE BEST YOU'VE GOT, I'D HAVE SAID SOMETHING GENUINELY OFFENSIVE.

KLUNCH
UGH!
ANYTHING ELSE?
HM?
RIGHT. BECAUSE STRIKE THREE WILL BREAK YOUR BRAIN IN HALF.
NOW. LET'S REMIND OURSELVES OF OUR ROLES.
I'M THE ONE WHO BURST IN AND OVERPOWERED YOU.
I'M THE ONE HOLDING THE OBSCENELY LARGE GUN.
RUNG'S LOOKING STRAIGHT AT US. HE'S SPOTTED THE CAMERA.
CLEVER RUNG...
AND WE'VE GOT AUDIO! NICE ONE, BLASTER.
—AND I'M THE ONE WHO—APPARENTLY—IS HAVING "AN ACUTE PSYCHOTIC EPISODE."
NOT ME. I DUNNO WHAT JUST HAPPENED.

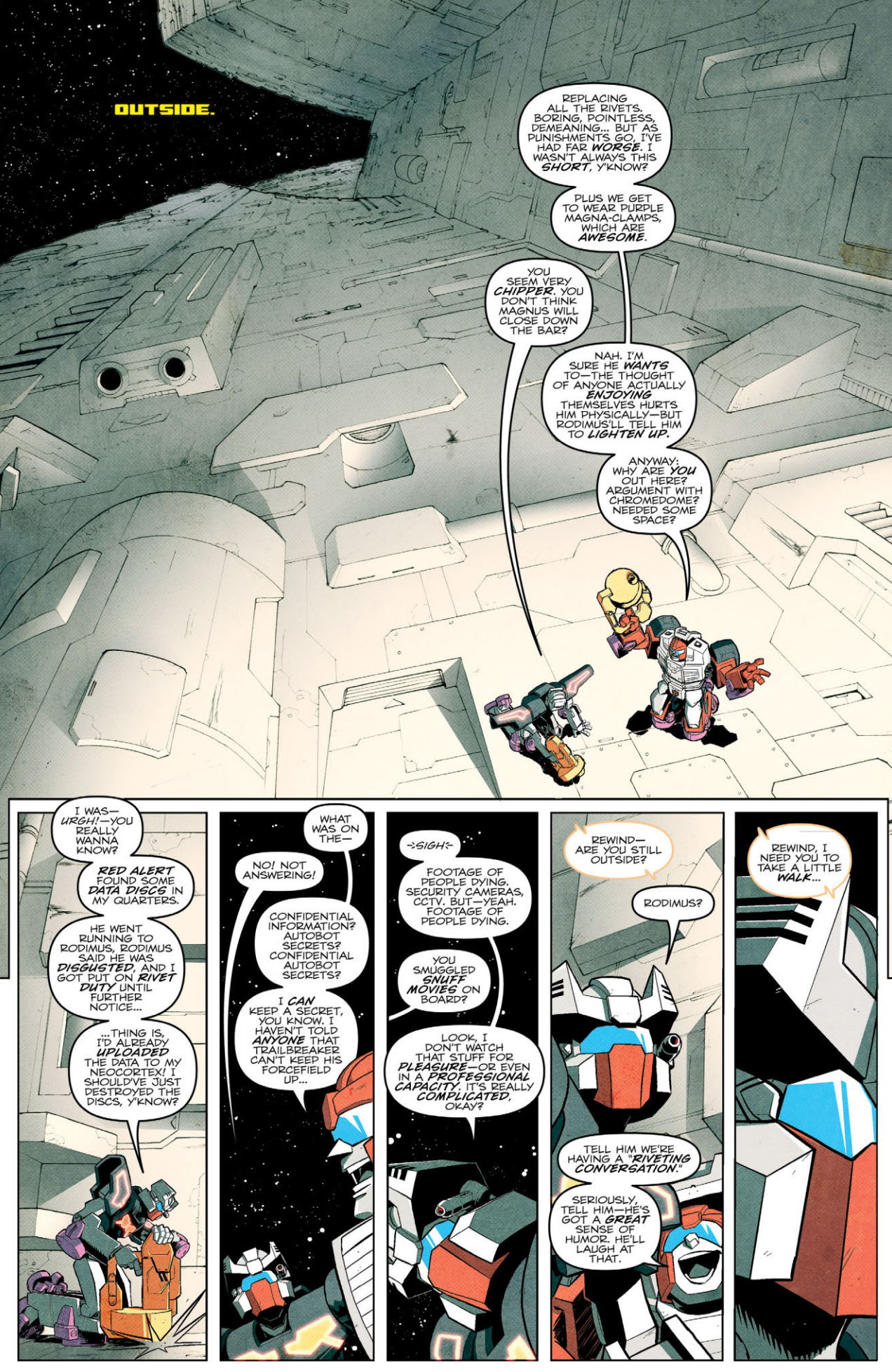
FORTRESS MAXIMUS—PLEASE. WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
YEAH, DON'T HOSTAGE-TAKERS USUALLY HAVE A LIST OF DEMANDS? IF YOU WANT A HELICOPTER YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO ASK ME VERY NICELY...
THERE'S A COMMUNICATOR OVER THERE. WHY NOT GIVE RODIMUS A CALL?
YOU WANNA KNOW WHY I'M DOING THIS? YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?
THIS IS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY. THIS IS ABOUT A DUTY OF CARE. YOUR WORDS, NOT MINE.
I KNOW YOU'RE BURNING, MAX—I KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS HURT YOUR HEAD—BUT YOU NEED TO BE MORE SPECIFIC.
THREE YEARS, TWO MONTHS, AND TEN DAYS! THERE: SPECIFIC ENOUGH FOR YOU?!
EH? I DON'T GET THAT.
I THINK I DO.
THAT'S HOW LONG IT TOOK HIGH COMMAND TO SEND HELP TO GARRUS 9!
THREE YEARS!
THREE YEARS BEFORE WE REACHED THE TOP OF PROWL'S "TO DO" LIST! THREE YEARS BEFORE HE SENT THE WRECKERS TO SWEEP UP THE MESS!
HOT ROD!
YOU KNOW WHO IT IS!
I'M LOOKING AT WHIRL AND—AND THE PSYCHIATRIST, AND I'M HAPPY TO KILL BOTH OF THEM UNLESS YOU TURN THIS SHIP AROUND AND TAKE US BACK TO CYBERTRON!
PROWL GETS ONE CHANCE TO EXPLAIN HIMSELF BEFORE I PUT MY FIST THROUGH HIS CHEST!
OKAY. FIRSTLY? IT'S RODIMUS.
SECONDLY, WE'RE ABOUT AS FAR AWAY FROM CYBERTRON AS—
SHUT UP!
DON'T YOU TELL ME TO—


I MEAN IT! I DON'T WANT A CONVERSATION!
IT'S A SIMPLE ENOUGH PROPOSITION: YOU TAKE ME HOME RIGHT NOW AND NO ONE IN THIS ROOM DIES.
OVER AND OUT!
"HOT ROD." HATE THAT.
NOW, YOU REALIZE THE FATAL FLAW IN YOUR PLAN, RIGHT?
YOU'VE JUST TOLD RODIMUS TO DO SOMETHING HE DOESN'T ACTUALLY WANT TO DO. NOW, IF YOU'D ORDERED HIM NOT TO RETURN TO CYBERTRON...
WHIRL'S RIGHT. RODIMUS IS REBELLIOUS BY NATURE. TRY TO IMPOSE YOUR WILL ON HIM AND AS A SIMPLE MATTER OF PRINCIPLE HE'LL—
WHAT'S THAT IN YOUR HAND?
MY WHAT?
YOU'RE HOLDING SOMETHING IN YOUR HAND.
NO, NO, YOUR RIGHT HAND. YOUR RIGHT HAND.
A MICROPHONE.
IN YOUR THUMB.
YOU'VE BEEN RECORDING ALL THIS, HAVEN'T YOU? PROBABLY BROADCASTING IT, TOO...
LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS IF I PULL.
DON'T! DON'T! IT'S DEEP-WIRED! IT'S NOT MEANT TO—
AAARRRGGHH!


THE MEDIBAY.
—HOSTAGE SITUATION ENTERS ITS THIRD HOUR. YOU ARE REMINDED THAT LEVEL 7 IS A RESTRICTED AREA! UNTIL THEN—
WHERE'S THE VOLUME ON THIS THING? AND WHO LET SIREN DO THE ANNOUNCEMENTS, ANYWAY?
—RODIMUS ASKS THAT YOU GO ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS AND AWAIT FURTHER UPDATES!
OKAY, NEARLY DONE. HIS POWER CELLS ARE AT 5%, BUT AT LEAST BOSS IS STABLE.
BOSS, PIPES, DOUBLETAP, DOGFIGHT, TURBINE.
WHY ONLY FIVE?
WHY ONLY—?
JEEZ, RATCHET. MAYBE FORT MAX THOUGHT HE'D MADE HIS POINT!
YES, BUT—BOSS WAS WITH INFERNO AND SUNSTREAKER, AND DOGFIGHT WAS WITH... BRAINSTORM?
(IT WAS BRAINSTORM, YEAH, 'COS HE SAID HE TRIED TO STOP HIM.)
WHY DIDN'T MAX TAKE THEM OUT, TOO?
I KNOW—RANDOM ACTS OF VIOLENCE ARE SO DAMN UNPREDICTABLE, AREN'T THEY?
"RANDOM." EVERYONE KEEPS USING THAT WORD, FIRST AID.
WHAT, YOU THINK HE WAS TARGETING THESE GUYS?
I DON'T KNOW. I JUST THINK THAT SOMETIMES, TO SEE A PATTERN...
...YOU NEED TO TAKE A STEP BACK.

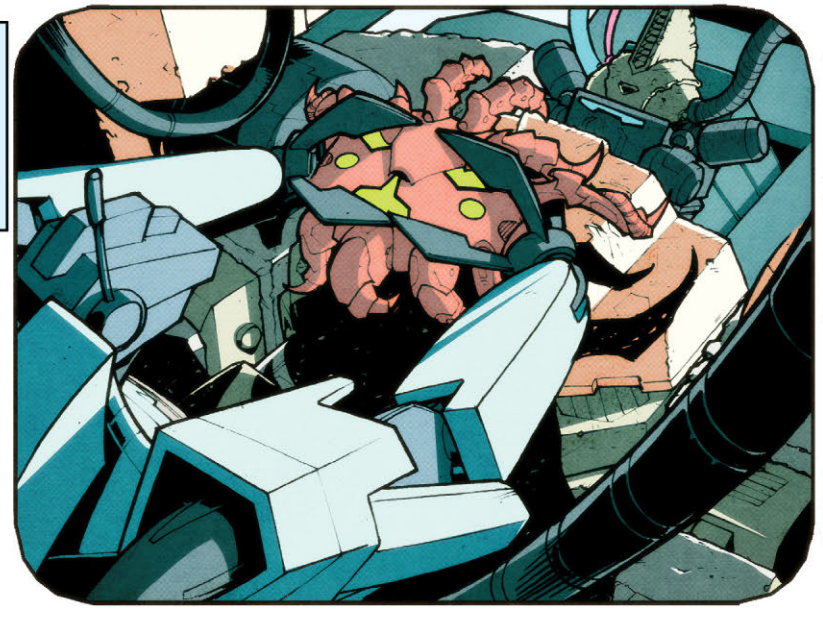

I GIVE UP. YOU WIN.
THREE HOURS. I AM SO BORED I THINK I'M GOING TO—
MAX, I SERIOUSLY DOUBT YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO SEE THIS THROUGH, BUT IF YOU HAVE, THEN PLEASE—JUST SKIP TO THE END AND KILL US.
WHIRL! WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?!
YOU TELL ME—THAT'S YOUR JOB, ISN'T IT?
THAT'S A POINT. WHY ARE YOU HERE?
EVERYONE KNOWS YOU'RE DAMAGED, BUT WHY ARE YOU DAMAGED?
YEAH—AS IF I'M GONNA SPILL MY GUTS FOR YOU.
YOU'D RATHER I SPILL THEM FOR YOU?
OH, PLEASE. ALL YOU CAN THREATEN ME WITH IS DEATH?
OKAY, YOU TELL ME. WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
YOU KNOW I CAN'T ANSWER THAT.
WHY?
BECAUSE IT'S CONFIDENTIAL! AND BECAUSE—
BECAUSE WHAT?
BECAUSE I HAVE A DUTY OF CARE TOWARDS MY PATIENTS.
TELL YOU WHAT...
...LET'S SEE HOW THAT WORKS IN PRACTICE.
OH, ALRIGHT THEN...

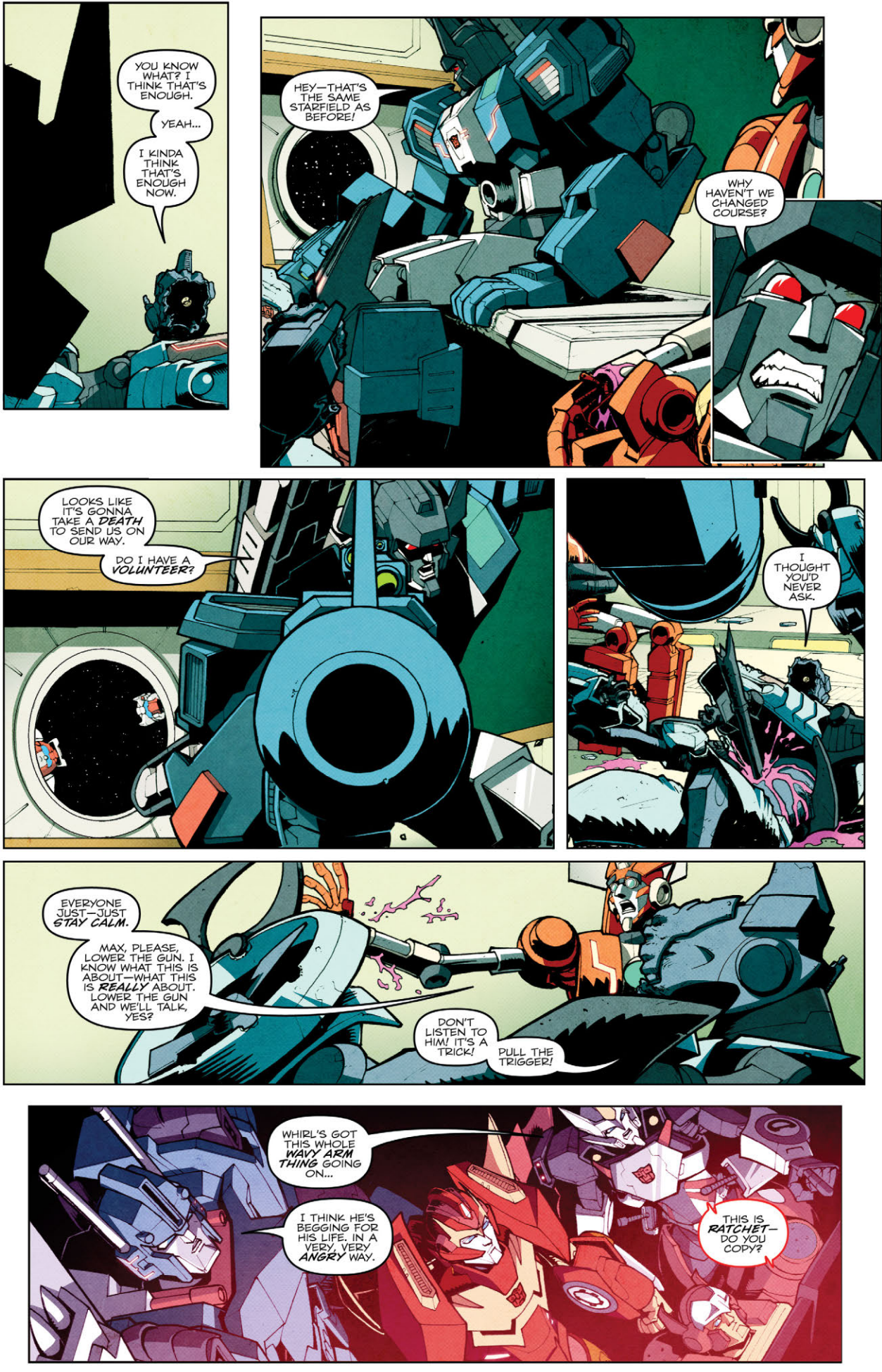
IF YOU MUST KNOW, I'M HERE BECAUSE I WAS KICKED OUT OF THE WRECKERS AND I TOOK IT BADLY.
VERY BADLY.
"CLEAR THE AREA AND SEND FOR ULTRA MAGNUS" BADLY.
IF I WANT TO REMAIN AN AUTOBOT—AND I THINK RIGHT NOW I DO—THEN I HAVE TO TALK THINGS THROUGH WITH WHATSISFACE OVER THERE. THUMBLESS.
FACT IS, YOU AND ME AREN'T SO DIFFERENT.
WRONG. I'M HERE BECAUSE OF AN INJUSTICE; YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE YOU APPALL PEOPLE.
HEY, YOU THINK THIS IS ME? YOU THINK YOU KNOW ME?
I USED TO BE A CRAFTSMAN! A CHRONOSMITH!
YOU WERE A WATCHMAKER?
"NOT AT FIRST. SEE, BEFORE THE WAR, I DID SOMETHING EVERYONE SAID WAS IMPOSSIBLE: I CHANGED JOBS. I REJECTED MY ALT MODE AND PERSUADED THE LOCAL FUNCTIONISTS TO LET ME LEAVE THE AERIAL CORPS.
"I MADE SUCH GOOD MONEY AS A WATCHMAKER THAT OTHER PEOPLE WANTED A CUT. WHEN I REFUSED TO COUGH UP THEY SENT THE HEAVIES. BOTH OF THEM.
"WHEN MY BUSINESS WAS DESTROYED, THAT'S WHEN EVERYTHING WENT TO HELL. I STARTED HANGING OUT IN THE OLD DEAD END WITH THE SYPHONERS AND THE COG SNATCHERS—AND 'COS I GOT INTO MY FAIR SHARE OF FIGHTS, I GOT NOTICED. NOTICED BY THE WRONG SORT OF PEOPLE."
SEE, MAX, WARBORN AUTOBOTS LIKE YOU DON'T REMEMBER THE SENATE—OR THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED FOR THEM.
THEY MADE ME MADE DO THINGS. THINGS I COULDN'T UNDO.
I RESISTED—AT FIRST. HEH. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE PERSUASIVE POWERS OF EMPURATA.
"WHAT'S RUNG DOING? ZOOM IN..."
...THERE. SEE? HE'S TAPPING THE MODEL OF THE ARK. WHY'S HE DOING THAT?
HE'S TAPPING THE WINDOWS. HE'S TRYING TO TELL US SOMETHING.
WHERE DID YOU SAY RUNG'S OFFICE WAS?

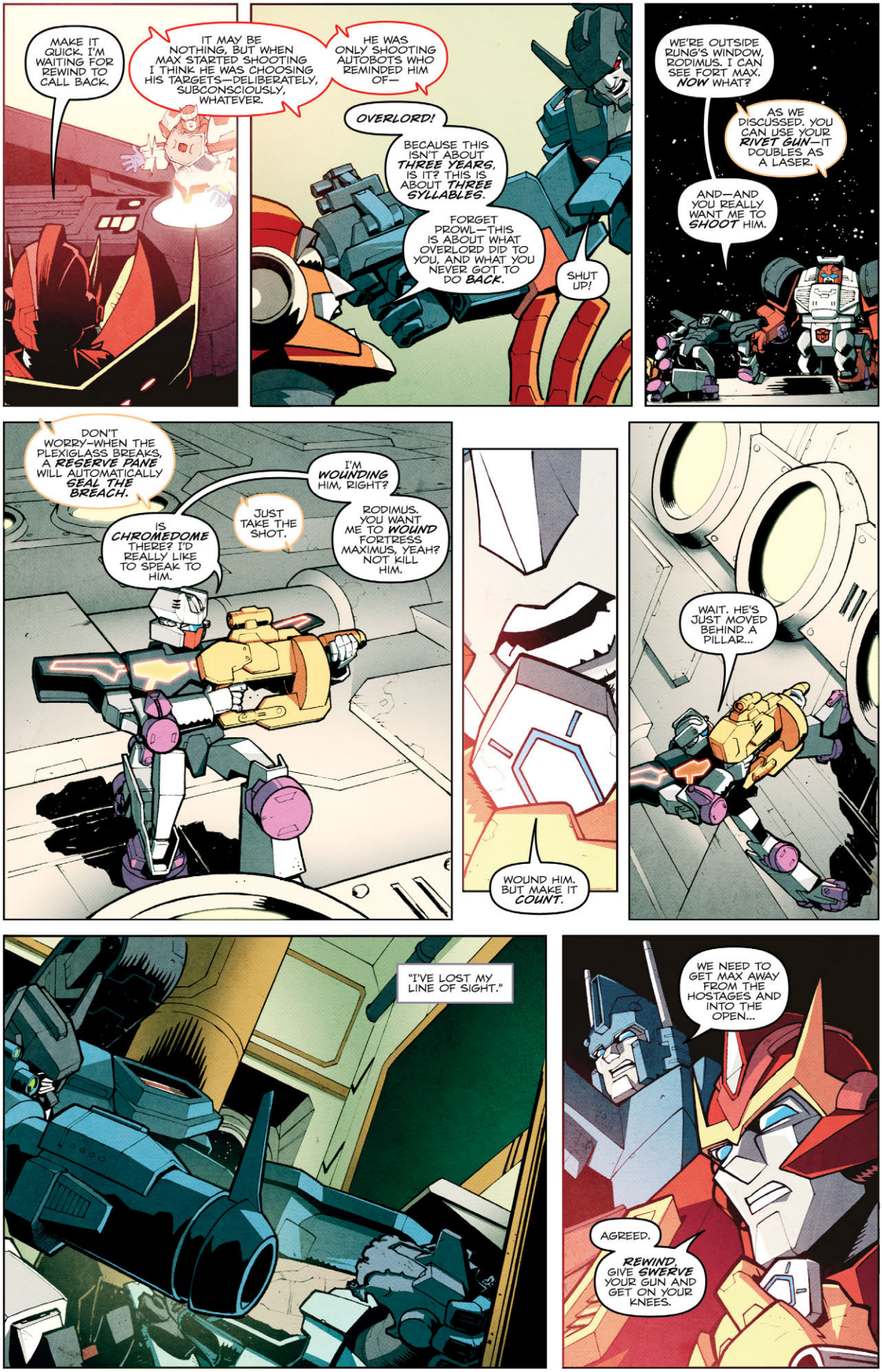

OUTSIDE.
REPLACING ALL THE RIVETS. BORING, POINTLESS, DEMEANING... BUT AS PUNISHMENTS GO, I'VE HAD FAR WORSE. I WASN'T ALWAYS THIS SHORT, Y'KNOW?
PLUS WE GET TO WEAR PURPLE MAGNA-CLAMPS, WHICH ARE AWESOME.
YOU SEEM VERY CHIPPER. YOU DON'T THINK MAGNUS WILL CLOSE DOWN THE BAR?
NAH. I'M SURE HE WANTS TO—THE THOUGHT OF ANYONE ACTUALLY ENJOYING THEMSELVES HURTS HIM PHYSICALLY—BUT RODIMUS'LL TELL HIM TO LIGHTEN UP.
ANYWAY: WHY ARE YOU OUT HERE? ARGUMENT WITH CHROMEDOME? NEEDED SOME SPACE?
I WAS—URGH!—YOU REALLY WANNA KNOW?
RED ALERT FOUND SOME DATA DISCS IN MY QUARTERS.
HE WENT RUNNING TO RODIMUS, RODIMUS SAID HE WAS DISGUSTED, AND I GOT PUT ON RIVET DUTY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE...
...THING IS, I'D ALREADY UPLOADED THE DATA TO MY NEOCORTEX! I SHOULD'VE JUST DESTROYED THE DISCS, Y'KNOW?
WHAT WAS ON THE—
NO! NOT ANSWERING!
CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION? AUTOBOT SECRETS? CONFIDENTIAL AUTOBOT SECRETS?
I CAN KEEP A SECRET, YOU KNOW. I HAVEN'T TOLD ANYONE THAT TRAILBREAKER CAN'T KEEP HIS FORCEFIELD UP...
-SIGH-
FOOTAGE OF PEOPLE DYING. SECURITY CAMERAS, CCTV. BUT—YEAH. FOOTAGE OF PEOPLE DYING.
YOU SMUGGLED SNUFF MOVIES ON BOARD?
LOOK, I DON'T WATCH THAT STUFF FOR PLEASURE—OR EVEN IN A PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY. IT'S REALLY COMPLICATED, OKAY?
REWIND—ARE YOU STILL OUTSIDE?
RODIMUS?
TELL HIM WE'RE HAVING A "RIVETING CONVERSATION."
SERIOUSLY, TELL HIM—HE'S GOT A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR. HE'LL LAUGH AT THAT.
REWIND, I NEED YOU TO TAKE A LITTLE WALK...

—SO THEN THE SENATE'S MEN GOT ME A JOB IN LAW ENFORCEMENT. SAID THEY WERE DOING ME A BIG OLD FAVOR.
ONE DAY, THEY—THEY KIND OF ORDERED ME TO KILL THIS PRISONER. I SCREWED THAT UP ROYALLY. ENDED UP BEING ARRESTED BY MY SENIOR OFFICER—A GUY NAMED ORION PAX.
YEAH, EXACTLY.
YEARS LATER, ORION—OPTIMUS—INVITED ME TO JOIN HIS MERRY BAND OF AUTOBOTS. WANTED TO LAY CLAIM TO ME BEFORE THE DECEPTICONS COULD.
FORGIVENESS AS A WEAPON OF WAR, YOU SEE. VERY OPTIMUS PRIME.
I BOUNCED AROUND A BIT, CHANGED MY NAME, BECAME A FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR, AND THEN EVENTUALLY I JOINED THE WRECKERS. AND FOR A TIME—AND IN HINDSIGHT IT SEEMS SUCH A SHORT TIME—I HAD EVERYTHING I WANTED...
YOU NEVER TOLD ME ANY OF THAT!
WELL YOU NEVER THREATENED TO SHOOT A FRIEND OF MINE!
A FRIEND...?

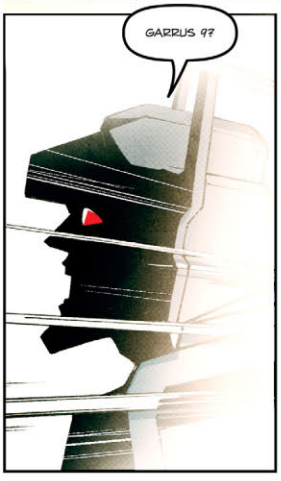
JUST ONE MORE QUESTION AND WE'RE DONE. WHY WERE YOU KICKED OUT OF WRECKERS?
LITERALLY ALL I DID WAS TRY TO KILL SPRINGER.
NOW, SEE, YOU'RE DOING A FACE. I KNOW IT SOUNDS BAD, BUT...
...AFTER G9 HE ENDED UP IN A COMA,* ROADBUSTER AND I WERE SUPPOSED TO WATCH HIM 'TIL HE RECOVERED—EXCEPT I KNEW THAT WAS NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN.
*SEE LAST STAND OF THE WRECKERS.

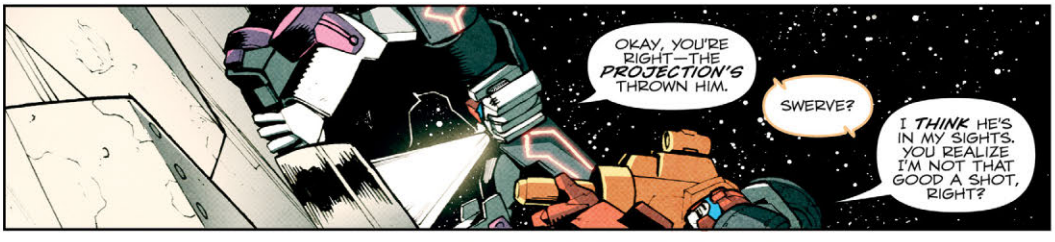

"ROADBUSTER INVENTED THIS WEAPON. HE CALLED IT 'THE SPARKEATER' BECAUSE IT—BASICALLY, IT DRAINED THE LIFE FORCE FROM ITS TARGETS. BRILLIANT, NASTY PIECE OF KIT—BUT PAINLESS, YEAH?
"I USED IT ON SPRINGER. TRIED TO, ANYWAY. ROADBUSTER INTERVENED AND HIT ME WITH THE VETO.
"'COS THAT'S HOW IT WORKS: ANY WRECKER CAN GET RID OF ANY OTHER WRECKER AT ANY TIME.
"AND I GUESS... I GUESS THAT'S WHEN IT ALL..."


YOU KNOW WHAT? I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH.
YEAH...
I KINDA THINK THAT'S ENOUGH NOW.
HEY—THAT'S THE SAME STARFIELD AS BEFORE!
WHY HAVEN'T WE CHANGED COURSE?
LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONNA TAKE A DEATH TO SEND US ON OUR WAY.
DO I HAVE A VOLUNTEER?
I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK.
EVERYONE JUST—JUST STAY CALM.
MAX, PLEASE, LOWER THE GUN. I KNOW WHAT THIS IS ABOUT—WHAT THIS IS REALLY ABOUT. LOWER THE GUN AND WE'LL TALK, YES?
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! IT'S A TRICK!
PULL THE TRIGGER!
WHIRL'S GOT THIS WHOLE WAVY ARM THING GOING ON...
I THINK HE'S BEGGING FOR HIS LIFE. IN A VERY, VERY ANGRY WAY.
THIS IS RATCHET—DO YOU COPY?


MAKE IT QUICK. I'M WAITING FOR REWIND TO CALL BACK.
IT MAY BE NOTHING, BUT WHEN MAX STARTED SHOOTING I THINK HE WAS CHOOSING HIS TARGETS—DELIBERATELY, SUBCONSCIOUSLY, WHATEVER.
HE WAS ONLY SHOOTING AUTOBOTS WHO REMINDED HIM OF—
OVERLORD!
BECAUSE THIS ISN'T ABOUT THREE YEARS, IS IT? THIS IS ABOUT THREE SYLLABLES.
FORGET PROWL—THIS IS ABOUT WHAT OVERLORD DID TO YOU, AND WHAT YOU NEVER GOT TO DO BACK.
SHUT UP!
WE'RE OUTSIDE RUNG'S WINDOW, RODIMUS. I CAN SEE FORT MAX. NOW WHAT?
AS WE DISCUSSED. YOU CAN USE YOUR RIVET GUN—IT DOUBLES AS A LASER.
AND—AND YOU REALLY WANT ME TO SHOOT HIM.
DON'T WORRY—WHEN THE PLEXIGLASS BREAKS, A RESERVE PANE WILL AUTOMATICALLY SEAL THE BREACH.
IS CHROMEDOME THERE? I'D REALLY LIKE TO SPEAK TO HIM.
JUST TAKE THE SHOT.
I'M WOUNDING HIM, RIGHT?
RODIMUS. YOU WANT ME TO WOUND FORTRESS MAXIMUS, YEAH? NOT KILL HIM.
WOUND HIM. BUT MAKE IT COUNT.
WAIT. HE'S JUST MOVED BEHIND A PILLAR...
"I'VE LOST MY LINE OF SIGHT."
WE NEED TO GET MAX AWAY FROM THE HOSTAGES AND INTO THE OPEN...
AGREED.
REWIND, GIVE SWERVE YOUR GUN AND GET ON YOUR KNEES.

COME ON! COME ON, YOU *COWARD!*
PRETEND I'M *OVERLORD!* PRETEND THIS IS—

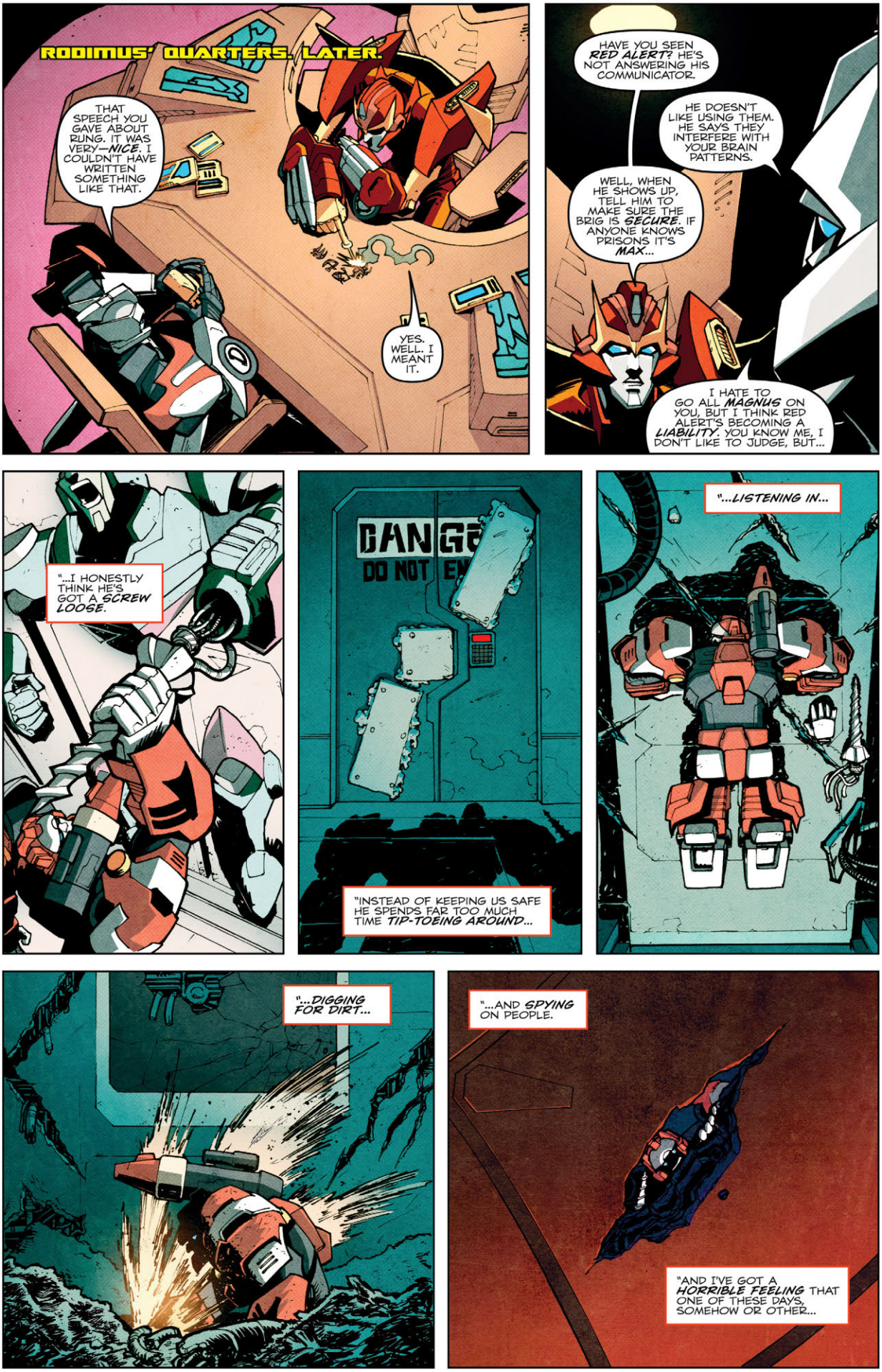

GARRUS 9?


OKAY, YOU'RE RIGHT—THE *PROJECTION'S* THROWN HIM.
SWERVE?
I *THINK* HE'S IN MY SIGHTS. YOU REALIZE I'M NOT THAT GOOD A SHOT, RIGHT?

HRRK!
SCHLUP

CLOSE YOUR EYES, MAX. DON'T LOOK.
IT'S OKAY. IT'S ALRIGHT.
WE'RE DONE. NO MORE FOR TODAY.

TAKE THE SHOT, SWERVE!
WHAT? BUT MAX HAS STOPPED.
YEAH, 'TIL HE STARTS AGAIN! NOW SHOOT!
BUT HE'S RIGHT NEXT TO RUNG!
SHOT!
NNN—!
SCHTOOM
NO!
SLIC
YES.


RODIMUS' QUARTERS. LATER.
THAT SPEECH YOU GAVE ABOUT RUNG. IT WAS VERY—NICE. I COULDN'T HAVE WRITTEN SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
YES. WELL. I MEANT IT.
HAVE YOU SEEN RED ALERT? HE'S NOT ANSWERING HIS COMMUNICATOR.
HE DOESN'T LIKE USING THEM. HE SAYS THEY INTERFERE WITH YOUR BRAIN PATTERNS.
WELL, WHEN HE SHOWS UP, TELL HIM TO MAKE SURE THE BRIG IS SECURE. IF ANYONE KNOWS PRISONS IT'S MAX...
I HATE TO GO ALL MAGNUS ON YOU, BUT I THINK RED ALERT'S BECOMING A LIABILITY. YOU KNOW ME, I DON'T LIKE TO JUDGE, BUT...
"...I HONESTLY THINK HE'S GOT A SCREW LOOSE.
DANG
DO NOT EN
"INSTEAD OF KEEPING US SAFE HE SPENDS FAR TOO MUCH TIME TIP-TOEING AROUND...
"...LISTENING IN...
"...DIGGING FOR DIRT...
"...AND SPYING ON PEOPLE.
"AND I'VE GOT A HORRIBLE FEELING THAT ONE OF THESE DAYS, SOMEHOW OR OTHER...

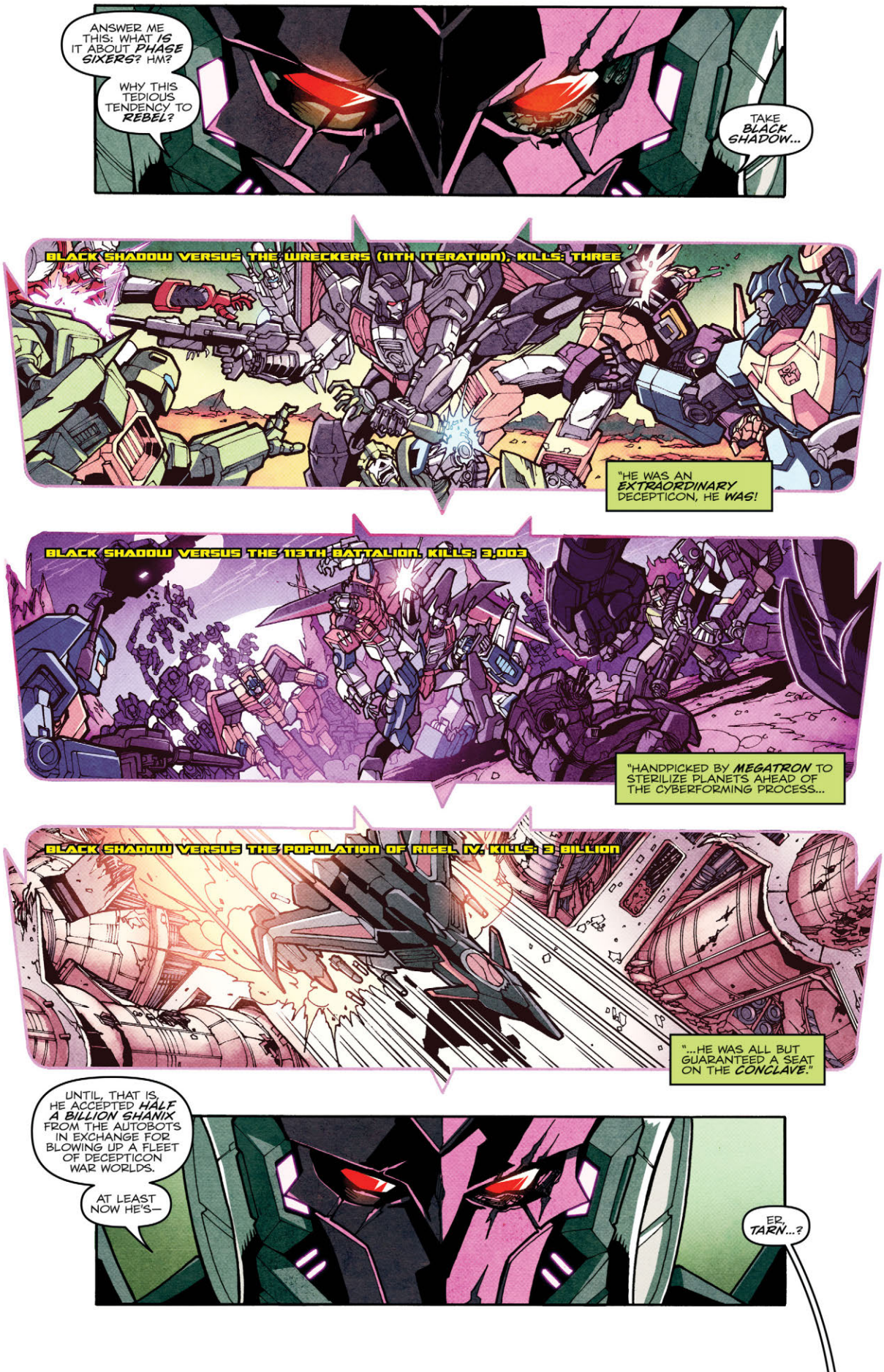
"...HE'LL BE THE DEATH OF US ALL."
KILL ME...
...KILL ME...
...KILL ME...

□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #6 COVER B

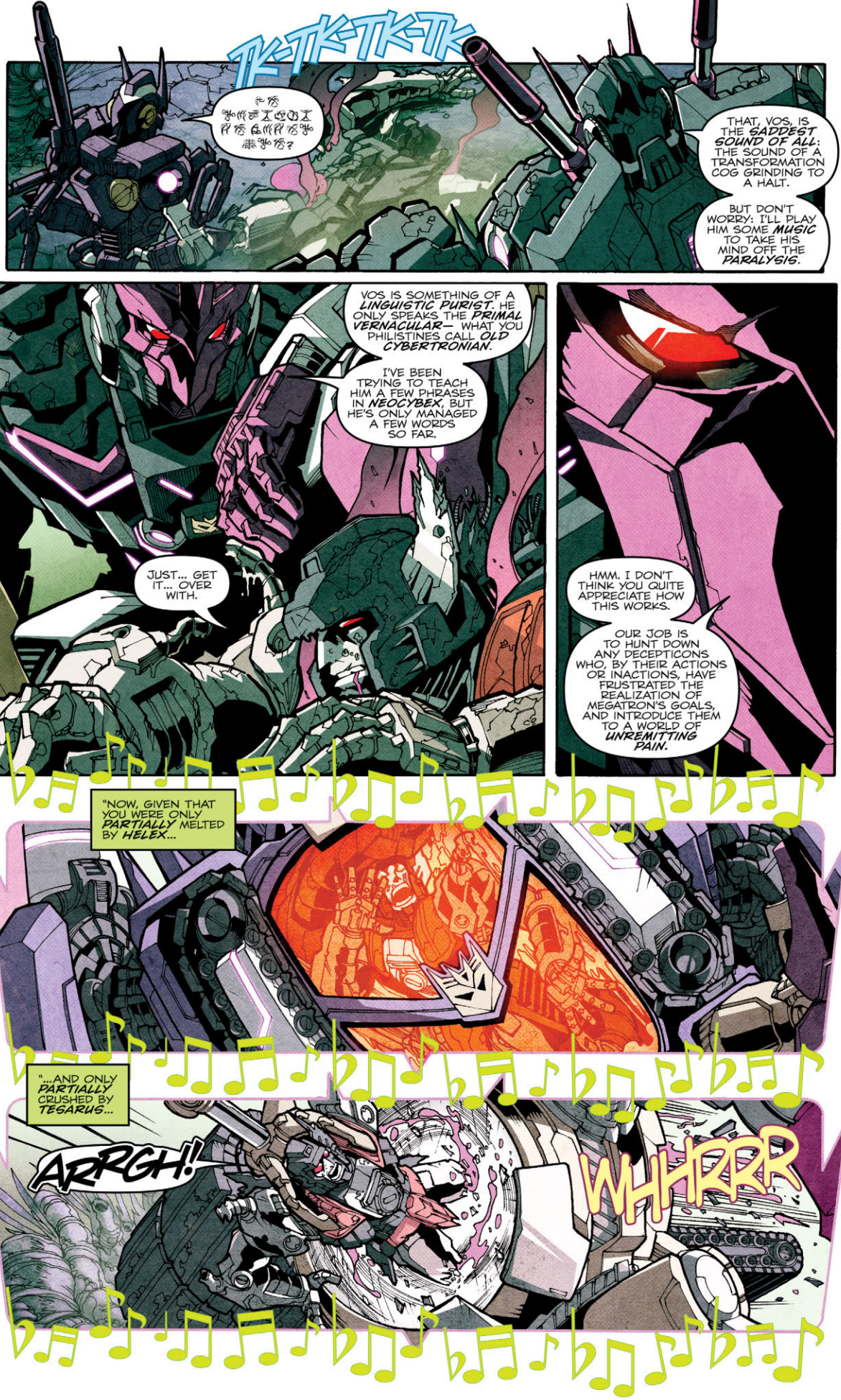
BY **NICK ROCHE** COLORS BY **JOSH BURCHAM**

☐ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #7 COVER A

BY **ALEX MILNE** COLORS BY **JOSH PEREZ**


ANSWER ME THIS: WHAT IS IT ABOUT PHASE SIXERS? HM?
WHY THIS TEDIOUS TENDENCY TO REBEL?
TAKE BLACK SHADOW...
BLACK SHADOW VERSUS THE WRECKERS (11TH ITERATION). KILLS: THREE
"HE WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY DECEPTICON, HE WAS!
BLACK SHADOW VERSUS THE 113TH BATTALION. KILLS: 3,003
"HANDPICKED BY MEGATRON TO STERILIZE PLANETS AHEAD OF THE CYBERFORMING PROCESS...
BLACK SHADOW VERSUS THE POPULATION OF RIGEL IV. KILLS: 3 BILLION
"...HE WAS ALL BUT GUARANTEED A SEAT ON THE CONCLAVE."
UNTIL, THAT IS, HE ACCEPTED HALF A BILLION SHANIX FROM THE AUTOBOTS IN EXCHANGE FOR BLOWING UP A FLEET OF DECEPTICON WAR WORLDS.
AT LEAST NOW HE'S—
ER, TARN...?

BLACK SHADOW VERSUS THE DECEPTICON JUSTICE DIVISION.
...I THINK HE'S STILL ALIVE.
YOU KNOW WHAT, HELEX? I DO BELIEVE YOU'RE RIGHT.
WHEN HE STOPPED SOBBING AND BEGGING FOR HIS LIFE I ASSUMED—
WELL, I ASSUMED THAT WAS THAT.
KAON— GIVE HIM ONE LAST JOLT AND RELEASE HIM.
AAIIEE!
BZZZZ
THUD

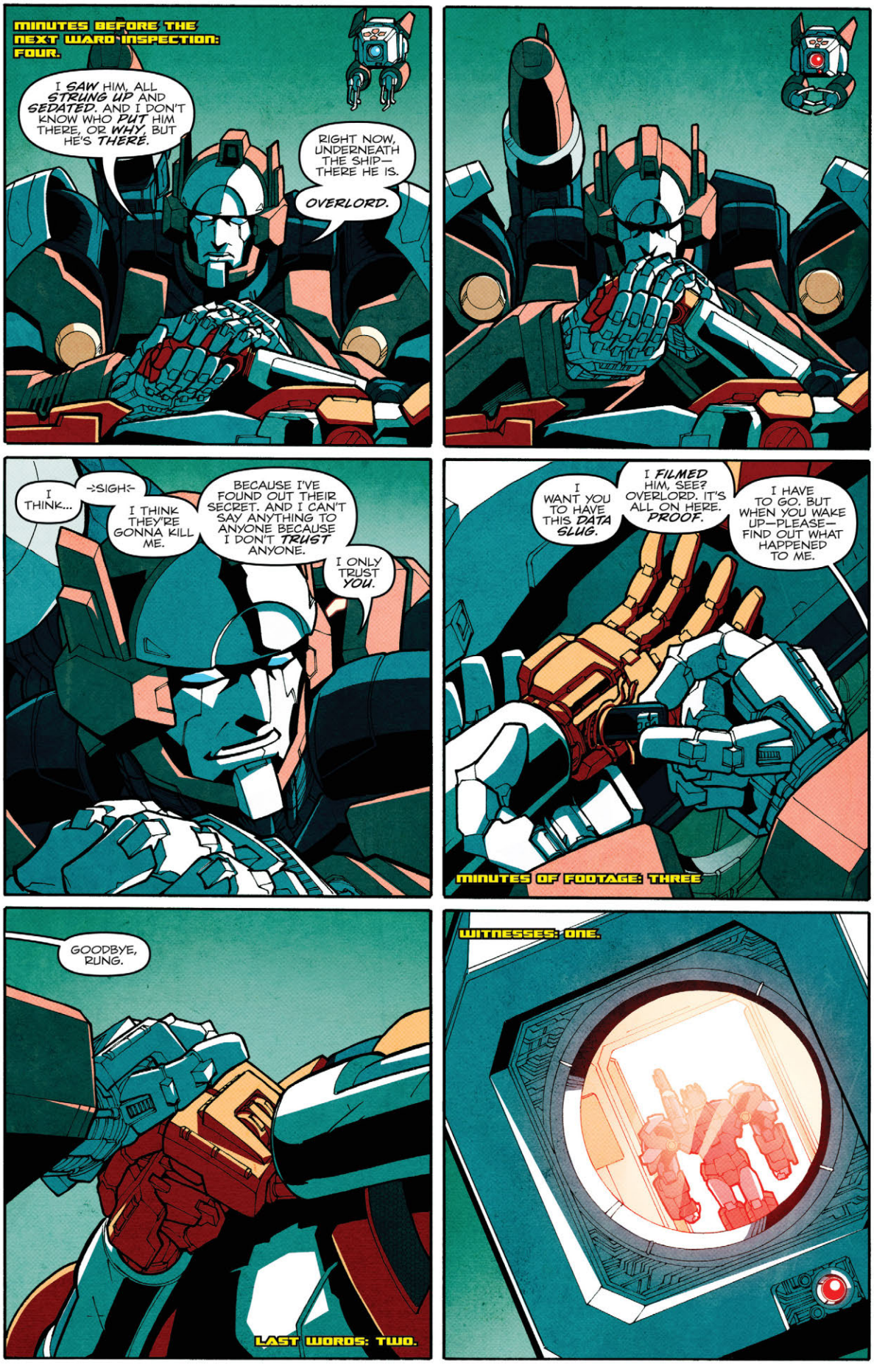

TK-TK-TK-TK
THAT, VOS, IS THE SADDEST SOUND OF ALL: THE SOUND OF A TRANSFORMATION COG GRINDING TO A HALT.
BUT DON'T WORRY: I'LL PLAY HIM SOME MUSIC TO TAKE HIS MIND OFF THE PARALYSIS.
VOS IS SOMETHING OF A LINGUISTIC PURIST. HE ONLY SPEAKS THE PRIMAL VERNACULAR— WHAT YOU PHILISTINES CALL OLD CYBERTRONIAN.
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TEACH HIM A FEW PHRASES IN NEOCYBEX, BUT HE'S ONLY MANAGED A FEW WORDS SO FAR.
JUST... GET IT... OVER WITH.
HMM. I DON'T THINK YOU QUITE APPRECIATE HOW THIS WORKS.
OUR JOB IS TO HUNT DOWN ANY DECEPTICONS WHO, BY THEIR ACTIONS OR INACTIONS, HAVE FRUSTRATED THE REALIZATION OF MEGATRON'S GOALS, AND INTRODUCE THEM TO A WORLD OF UNREMITTING PAIN.
"NOW, GIVEN THAT YOU WERE ONLY PARTIALLY MELTED BY HELEX...
"...AND ONLY PARTIALLY CRUSHED BY TESARUS...
ARRGH!
WHHRRR

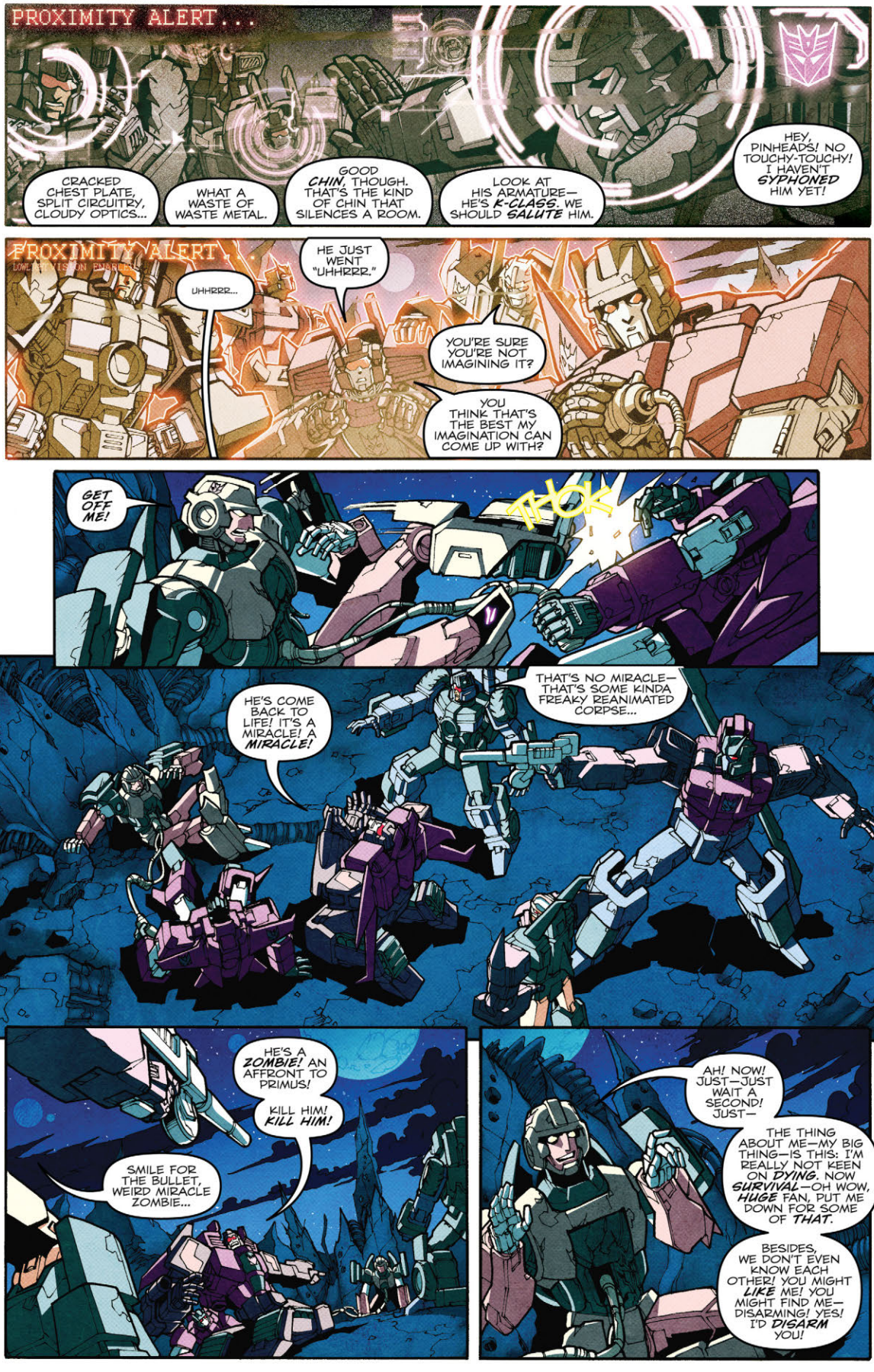
...I'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT WAS OBVIOUS.
BUT TAKE HEART: IF WORD OF YOUR PREPOSTEROUSLY GRUESOME DEMISE REACHES JUST ONE HESITANT DECEPTICON AND TERRIFIES HIM INTO STAYING THE COURSE, THEN ALL THE PAIN YOU'VE SUFFERED WOULD'VE BEEN WORTH IT.
BUT THE WAR'S OVER.
BUT THE WAR'S WHAT?
THE WAR'S OVER?
OH, BLACK SHADOW. THAT'S SWEET, BUT—
THE WAR WON'T BE OVER UNTIL MEGATRON SAYS SO. AND HE'LL SAY NOTHING UNTIL HE PRESIDES OVER A SOCIETY SO PEACEFUL THAT THE VERY NOTION OF CONFLICT IS LITERALLY INCONCEIVABLE.
AS HE WRITES IN "TOWARDS PEACE":
"MY WEAPON IS MY BURDEN: A REMINDER OF THE PATH I WAS FORCED TO TAKE.
"WHEN THE WORD 'WEAPON' IS EMPTIED OF MEANING; WHEN THE PURPOSE OF A WEAPON IS IMPOSSIBLE TO GRASP; WHEN THE REJECTION OF MY WEAPON IS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO NO ONE OTHER THAN MYSELF... ONLY THEN SHALL I REMOVE IT FROM MY ARM.
"BECAUSE ONLY THEN WILL I HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO RID MYSELF OF MY BURDEN."
I COULD GO ON, BUT—LISTEN! HAVE YOU NOTICED? I'VE STOPPED THE MUSIC.
IS THAT SIGNIFICANT? WHY YES! YES IT IS!
YOU'RE THINKING: "I'VE SEEN WHAT THE OTHER FOUR CAN DO, BUT THEIR LEADER—WITH HIS FINE MUSIC AND HIS LITERARY QUOTATIONS AND HIS DOUBLE FUSION CANNON—WHAT MAKES HIM SO SPECIAL?"
HEURK!

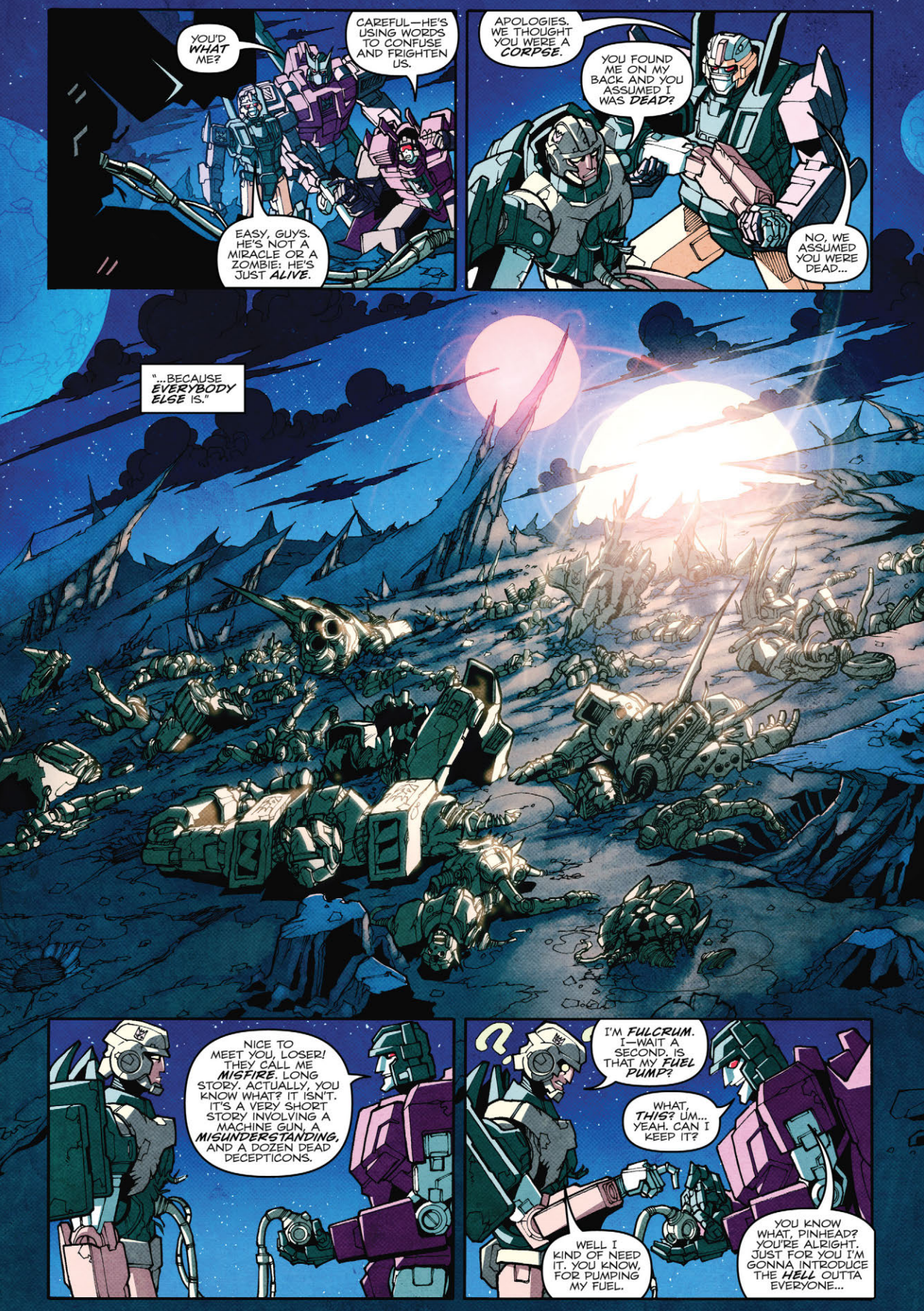
HERE'S THE THING: THEY SAY I CAN TALK PEOPLE TO DEATH. "WEAPONIZED CONVERSATION," THEY SAY.
"I DON'T KNOW," I SAY. "SOUNDS A BIT PRETENTIOUS."
"MAYBE SO," THEY SAY, "BUT YOU CAN MODULATE THE TIMBRE OF YOUR VOICE SO THAT IT FALLS INTO STEP WITH THE PULSE OF THE LISTENER'S SPARK."
"WELL," I SAY, "THERE IS THAT."
"AND THEN, BY GRADUALLY LOWERING YOUR VOICE," THEY SAY, "YOU CAN COAX THE SPARK INTO GIVING UP."
THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY.
WHAT DO YOU SAY?
I'M SO, SO SORRY.
STAND BACK, EVERYONE. PHASE SIXERS HAVE A TENDENCY TO GO—
VOMF
KILLS: ONE
BORED NOW. WHO'S NEXT ON THE LIST?
THAT'S ALL VERY WELL, VOS, BUT WE'VE GOT TO FIND HIM FIRST. KAON—KEEP SCANNING FOR HIS ENERGY SIGNATURE.
IN THE MEANTIME, OUR NEXT TARGET CAN BE FOUND ON CLEMENCY, IN THE KOL SYSTEM.
WHAT DID HE DO? HE LIVED, VOS.
HE LIVED.

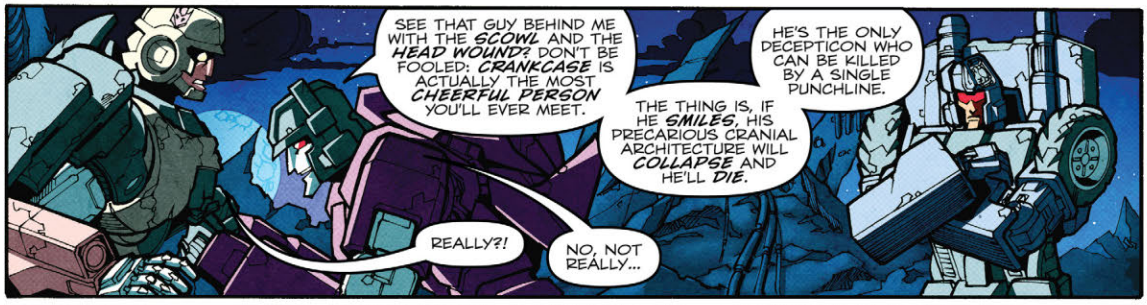
RULES OF DISENGAGEMENT

THE LOST LIGHT MEDIBAY.
I'M TELLING YOU, HE'S HOLDING HIS HEAT. HE'S STABILIZING.
WHAT'RE THE READOUTS TELLING YOU, AMBULON?
THEY'RE TELLING ME RUNG'S GOING TO MAKE IT.
YOU KNOW, IF I BELIEVED IN THEM—
(WHICH I DON'T.)
—I'D SAY THIS CLASSIFIES AS A MIRACLE.
LATER.
HOURS SINCE THE OPERATION THAT SAVED RUNG'S LIFE: FIVE
THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.
I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE VOICE* AND THEY DID THIS TO YOU—JUST TO SCARE ME OFF.
OH RUNG, IT'S SERIOUS. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, BUT...
*ISSUE FIVE
...THERE'S A MONSTER IN THE BASEMENT.


MINUTES BEFORE THE NEXT WARD INSPECTION: FOUR.
I SAW HIM. ALL STRUNG UP AND SEDATED. AND I DON'T KNOW WHO PUT HIM THERE, OR WHY, BUT HE'S THERE.
RIGHT NOW, UNDERNEATH THE SHIP—THERE HE IS.
OVERLORD.
I THINK...
-:SIGH:-
I THINK THEY'RE GONNA KILL ME.
BECAUSE I'VE FOUND OUT THEIR SECRET. AND I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING TO ANYONE BECAUSE I DON'T TRUST ANYONE.
I ONLY TRUST YOU.
I WANT YOU TO HAVE THIS DATA SLUG.
I FILMED HIM, SEE? OVERLORD. IT'S ALL ON HERE. PROOF.
I HAVE TO GO. BUT WHEN YOU WAKE UP—PLEASE—FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO ME.
MINUTES OF FOOTAGE: THREE
GOODBYE, RUNG.
LAST WORDS: TWO.
WITNESSES: ONE.


PROXIMITY ALERT...
CRACKED CHEST PLATE, SPLIT CIRCUITRY, CLOUDY OPTICS...
WHAT A WASTE OF WASTE METAL.
GOOD *CHIN*, THOUGH. THAT'S THE KIND OF CHIN THAT SILENCES A ROOM.
LOOK AT HIS ARMATURE—HE'S *K-CLASS*. WE SHOULD *SALUTE* HIM.
HEY, PINHEADS! NO TOUCHY-TOUCHY! I HAVEN'T *SYPHONED* HIM YET!
PROXIMITY ALERT
UHHRRR...
HE JUST WENT "UHHRRR."
YOU'RE SURE YOU'RE NOT IMAGINING IT?
YOU THINK THAT'S THE BEST MY IMAGINATION CAN COME UP WITH?
GET OFF ME!
TKOK
HE'S COME BACK TO LIFE! IT'S A MIRACLE! A *MIRACLE!*
THAT'S NO MIRACLE—THAT'S SOME KINDA FREAKY REANIMATED CORPSE...
HE'S A *ZOMBIE!* AN AFFRONT TO PRIMUS!
KILL HIM! *KILL HIM!*
SMILE FOR THE BULLET, WEIRD MIRACLE ZOMBIE...
AH! NOW! JUST—JUST WAIT A SECOND! JUST—
THE THING ABOUT ME—MY BIG THING—IS THIS: I'M REALLY NOT KEEN ON *DYING*. NOW *SURVIVAL*—OH WOW, *HUGE* FAN, PUT ME DOWN FOR SOME OF *THAT*.
BESIDES, WE DON'T EVEN KNOW EACH OTHER! YOU MIGHT *LIKE* ME! YOU MIGHT FIND ME—DISARMING! YES! I'D *DISARM* YOU!


YOU'D WHAT ME?
CAREFUL—HE'S USING WORDS TO CONFUSE AND FRIGHTEN US.
EASY, GUYS. HE'S NOT A MIRACLE OR A ZOMBIE: HE'S JUST ALIVE.
APOLOGIES. WE THOUGHT YOU WERE A CORPSE.
YOU FOUND ME ON MY BACK AND YOU ASSUMED I WAS DEAD?
NO, WE ASSUMED YOU WERE DEAD...
"...BECAUSE EVERYBODY ELSE IS."
NICE TO MEET YOU, LOSER! THEY CALL ME MISFIRE. LONG STORY. ACTUALLY, YOU KNOW WHAT? IT ISN'T. IT'S A VERY SHORT STORY INVOLVING A MACHINE GUN, A MISUNDERSTANDING, AND A DOZEN DEAD DECEPTICONS.
I'M FULCRUM. I—WAIT A SECOND. IS THAT MY FUEL PUMP?
WHAT, THIS? UM... YEAH. CAN I KEEP IT?
WELL I KIND OF NEED IT. YOU KNOW, FOR PUMPING MY FUEL.
YOU KNOW WHAT, PINHEAD? YOU'RE ALRIGHT. JUST FOR YOU I'M GONNA INTRODUCE THE HELL OUTTA EVERYONE...


SEE THAT GUY BEHIND ME WITH THE SCOWL AND THE HEAD WOUND? DON'T BE FOOLED: CRANKCASE IS ACTUALLY THE MOST CHEERFUL PERSON YOU'LL EVER MEET.
HE'S THE ONLY DECEPTICON WHO CAN BE KILLED BY A SINGLE PUNCHLINE.
THE THING IS, IF HE SMILES, HIS PRECARIOUS CRANIAL ARCHITECTURE WILL COLLAPSE AND HE'LL DIE.
REALLY?!
NO, NOT REALLY...

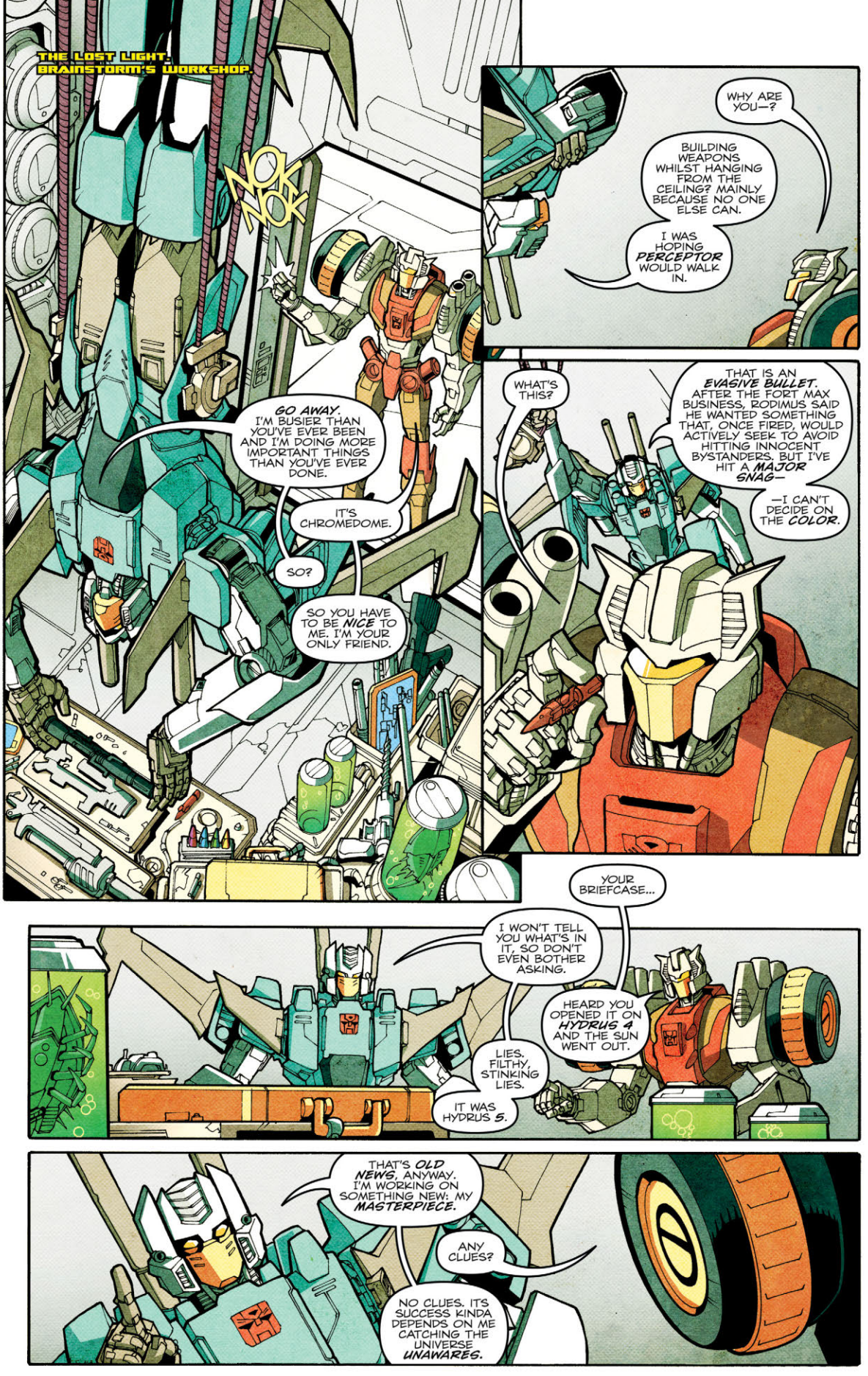
...YOU'RE JUST MISERABLE, AREN'T YOU CRANKCASE?
BAH!
I KNOW. YOU'VE SEEN IT WRITTEN DOWN BUT NEVER HEARD IT SAID OUT LOUD, RIGHT?
DID HE JUST SAY—?

SPINISTER TRIED TO SHOOT YOU, BUT THEN HE TRIES TO SHOOT EVERYONE. TO HIM, THE WORLD IS A COLLECTION OF VAGUELY HOSTILE SHAPES.
IF HE SEEMS DISTRACTED BY HIS OWN FINGERS IT'S BECAUSE—AND I PRESENT THIS AS AN EMPIRICAL TRUTH—HE IS TRULY THE STUPIDEST PERSON IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

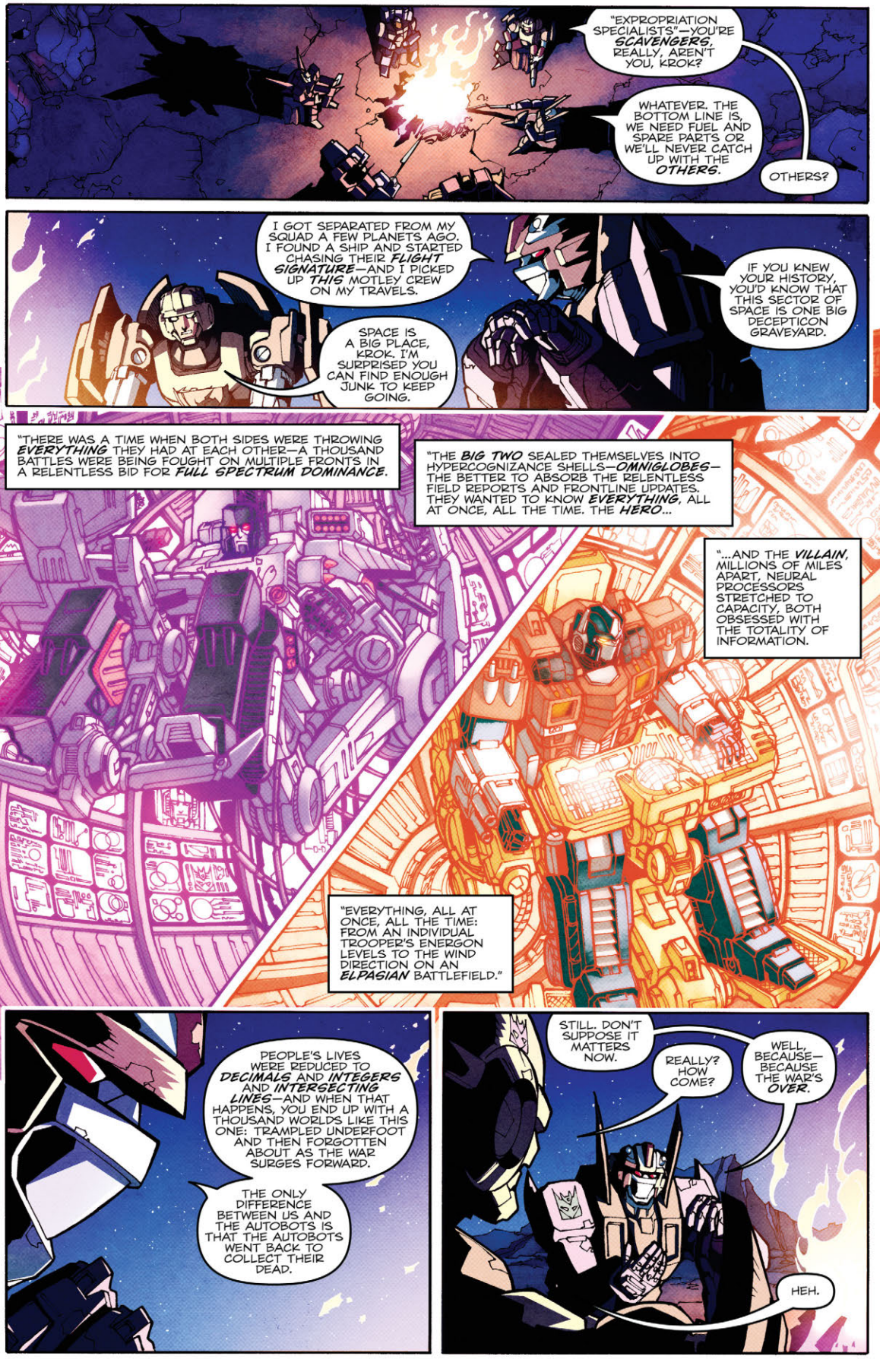
THE TWITCHY NEOPRIMALIST WITH THE BIG FEET IS FLYWHEELS. HE SUFFERS FROM A RARE AND POSSIBLY MADE UP TYPE OF PSYCHOSOMATIC HYPERREFLEXIA: HE CAN'T TELL A LIE WITHOUT CHANGING SHAPE.
NOT TRUE!

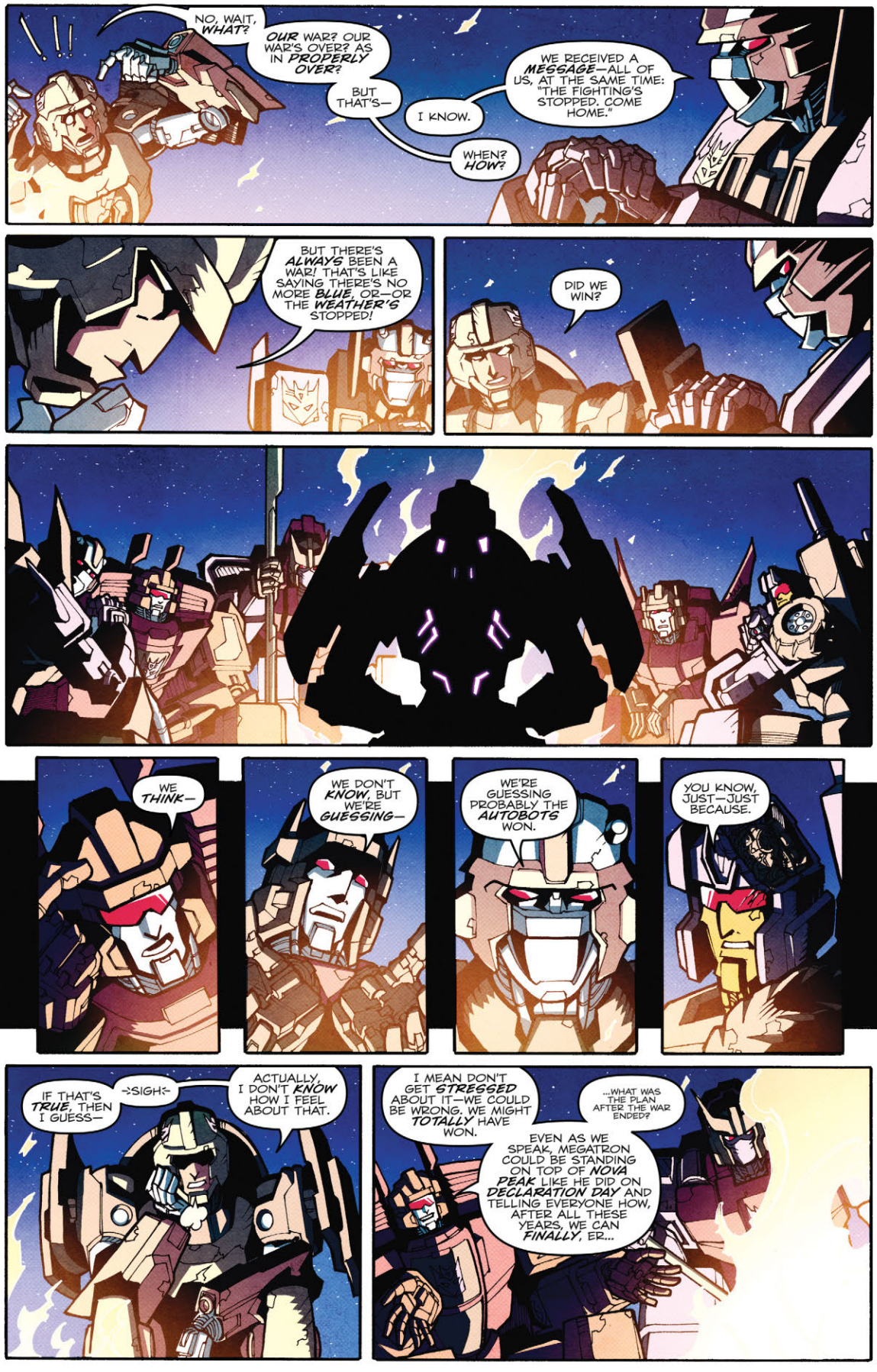
AND THE GUY WITH THE CLENCHED FISTS AND THE AIR OF QUIET DESPERATION IS KROK. HE'S A MILITARY STRATEGIST, SO THESE DAYS HE HAS A LOT OF TIME ON HIS HANDS.
BUT HEY! UNLESS YOU'RE MEGATRON IN A NEW BODY (IN WHICH CASE, NO DISRESPECT, BUT I HOPE YOU KEPT THE RECEIPT), KROK IS THE HIGHEST-RANKING DECEPTICON IN THE VICINITY AND THAT MAKES HIM OUR INTERIM, MAKE DO, STAND-IN LEADER-FOR-THE-TIME-BEING!

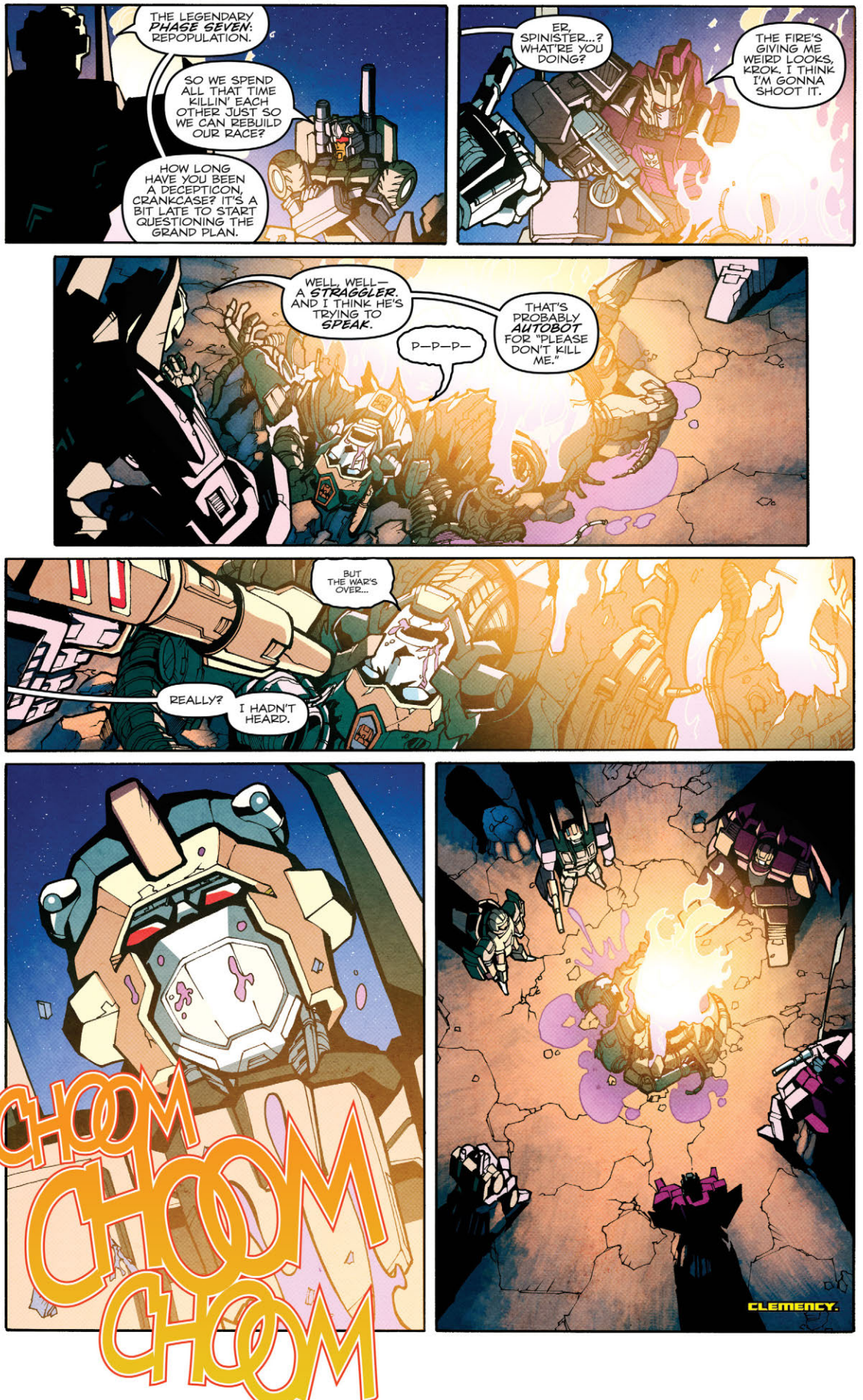
WELL THAT WAS... RELENTLESS.
AGAIN, APOLOGIES. MISFIRE IS USUALLY SLIGHTLY LESS WIRED.
WE'RE EXPROPRIATION SPECIALISTS, YOU SEE, AND IT'S MISFIRE'S JOB TO EXTRACT ENERGON FROM OUR FALLEN COMRADES. TROUBLE IS, HE CAN'T RESIST SAMPLING THE GOODS.
NOT FAR FROM HERE IS THE SEMI-EXSANGUINATED BODY OF A MONSTERCON WHO—WE NOW REALIZE—OVERDOSED ON CIRCUIT SPEEDERS...


THE LOST LIGHT.
BRAINSTORM'S WORKSHOP.
NO! NO!
GO AWAY. I'M BUSIER THAN YOU'VE EVER BEEN AND I'M DOING MORE IMPORTANT THINGS THAN YOU'VE EVER DONE.
IT'S CHROMEDOME.
SO?
SO YOU HAVE TO BE NICE TO ME. I'M YOUR ONLY FRIEND.
WHY ARE YOU—?
BUILDING WEAPONS WHILST HANGING FROM THE CEILING? MAINLY BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE CAN.
I WAS HOPING PERCEPTOR WOULD WALK IN.
WHAT'S THIS?
THAT IS AN EVASIVE BULLET. AFTER THE FORT MAX BUSINESS, RODIMUS SAID HE WANTED SOMETHING THAT, ONCE FIRED, WOULD ACTIVELY SEEK TO AVOID HITTING INNOCENT BYSTANDERS. BUT I'VE HIT A MAJOR SNAG—
—I CAN'T DECIDE ON THE COLOR.
YOUR BRIEFCASE...
I WON'T TELL YOU WHAT'S IN IT, SO DON'T EVEN BOTHER ASKING.
HEARD YOU OPENED IT ON HYDRUS 4 AND THE SUN WENT OUT.
LIES. FILTHY, STINKING LIES.
IT WAS HYDRUS 5.
THAT'S OLD NEWS, ANYWAY. I'M WORKING ON SOMETHING NEW: MY MASTERPIECE.
ANY CLUES?
NO CLUES. ITS SUCCESS KINDA DEPENDS ON ME CATCHING THE UNIVERSE UNAWARES.

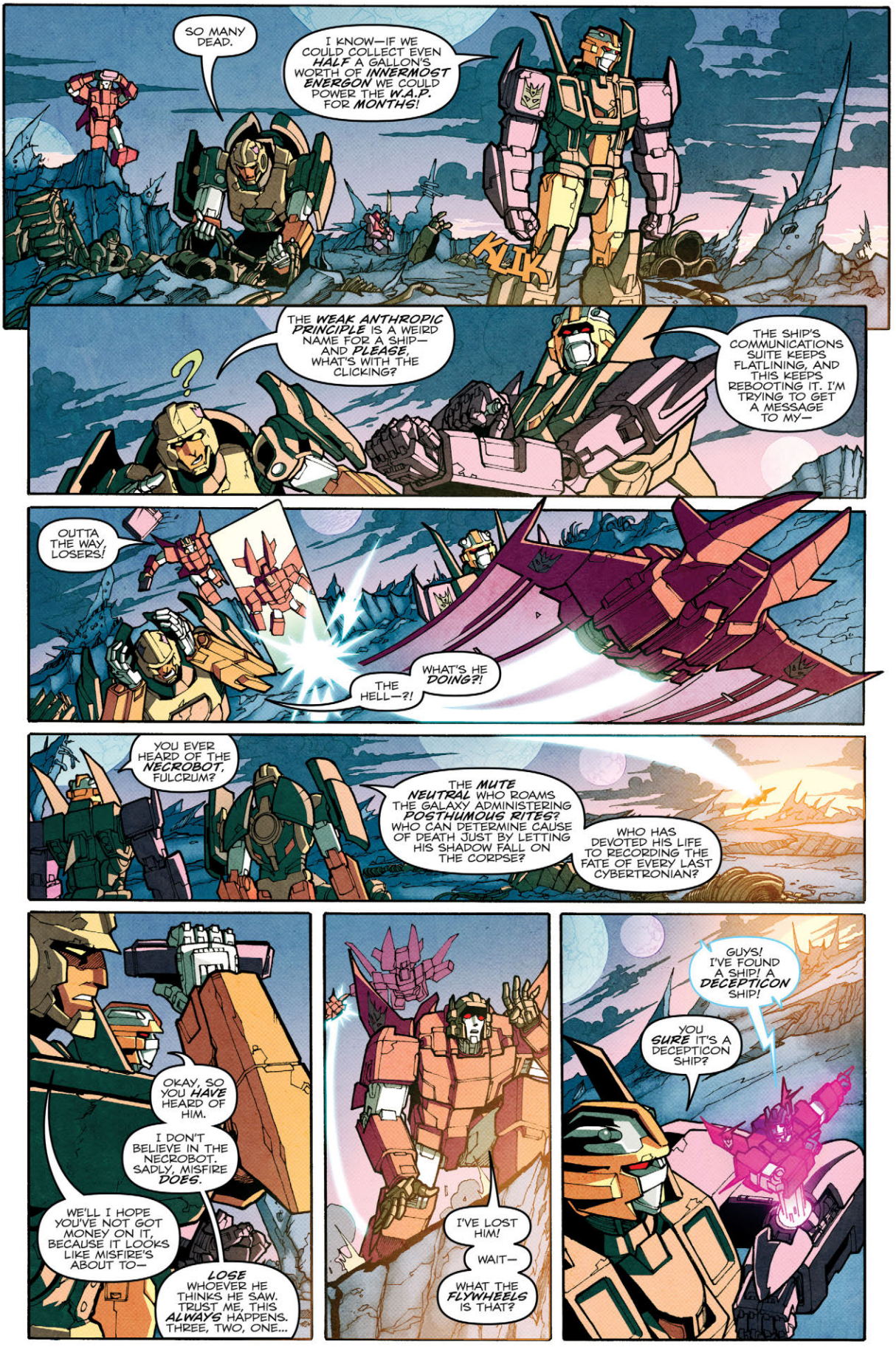
ANYWAY, WHY ARE YOU HERE? IT MUST BE SOMETHING DODGY, 'COS YOU'VE NOT BROUGHT REWIND WITH YOU.
IT'S ABOUT THE GUN I BROUGHT YOU— THE ONE I SWIPED FROM SKIDS.
YEAH, HOW'D YOU MANAGE THAT? ISN'T HE LIKE THE DEADLIEST THEORETICIAN IN THE UNIVERSE OR SOMETHING?
"I PLAYED A HUNCH AND WAITED 'TIL HE WAS DISTRACTED.
KISH
"HE STILL HASN'T NOTICED IT'S GONE MISSING."
HERE'S YOUR GUN.
IT EXPLODED IN MY FACE AS SOON AS I OPENED IT UP. SO THANKS FOR THAT.
LUCKY FOR YOU I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THE INTERNAL MECHANISMS.
CHROMEDOME, YOU'RE LOOKING AT A BONA FIDE BINARY GUN.
WHAT'S A BINARY GUN?
I'M NOT SURE—I'VE ONLY JUST MADE UP THE NAME.
BUT I CALLED IT A BINARY GUN BECAUSE INSIDE THERE'S ONLY ROOM FOR TWO CARTRIDGES, HERE AND HERE.
SO WHAT DOES IT DO? WHERE DID SKIDS GET IT? WHY'D HE CARRY IT AROUND WITH HIM ALL THE TIME?
I DON'T KNOW! I'VE DONE MY BIT...!
YOU MADE THE GUN BLOW UP AND THEN YOU GAVE IT A NAME! I COULD'VE DONE THAT! AND I'D HAVE COME UP WITH A BETTER NAME!
WELL, THERE WAS ONE OTHER THING. SOME OF THE ENGINEERING WAS FAMILIAR. IT SOUNDS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT—
BUT WHAT?
I THINK IT CAME FROM THE INSTITUTE.


"EXPROPRIATION SPECIALISTS"—YOU'RE *SCAVENGERS*, REALLY, AREN'T YOU, KROK?
WHATEVER. THE BOTTOM LINE IS, WE NEED FUEL AND SPARE PARTS OR WE'LL NEVER CATCH UP WITH THE *OTHERS*.
OTHERS?
I GOT SEPARATED FROM MY SQUAD A FEW PLANETS AGO. I FOUND A SHIP AND STARTED CHASING THEIR *FLIGHT SIGNATURE*—AND I PICKED UP *THIS* MOTLEY CREW ON MY TRAVELS.
SPACE IS A BIG PLACE, KROK. I'M SURPRISED YOU CAN FIND ENOUGH JUNK TO KEEP GOING.
IF YOU KNEW YOUR HISTORY, YOU'D KNOW THAT THIS SECTOR OF SPACE IS ONE BIG DECEPTICON GRAVEYARD.
"THERE WAS A TIME WHEN BOTH SIDES WERE THROWING *EVERYTHING* THEY HAD AT EACH OTHER—A THOUSAND BATTLES WERE BEING FOUGHT ON MULTIPLE FRONTS IN A RELENTLESS BID FOR *FULL SPECTRUM DOMINANCE*.
"THE *BIG TWO* SEALED THEMSELVES INTO HYPERCOGNIZANCE SHELLS—*OMNIGLOBES*—THE BETTER TO ABSORB THE RELENTLESS FIELD REPORTS AND FRONTLINE UPDATES. THEY WANTED TO KNOW *EVERYTHING*, ALL AT ONCE, ALL THE TIME. THE *HERO*...
"...AND THE *VILLAIN*, MILLIONS OF MILES APART, NEURAL PROCESSORS STRETCHED TO CAPACITY, BOTH OBSESSED WITH THE TOTALITY OF INFORMATION.
"EVERYTHING, ALL AT ONCE, ALL THE TIME: FROM AN INDIVIDUAL TROOPER'S ENERGON LEVELS TO THE WIND DIRECTION ON AN *ELPASIAN* BATTLEFIELD."
PEOPLE'S LIVES WERE REDUCED TO *DECIMALS* AND *INTEGERS* AND *INTERSECTING LINES*—AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, YOU END UP WITH A THOUSAND WORLDS LIKE THIS ONE: TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT AND THEN FORGOTTEN ABOUT AS THE WAR SURGES FORWARD.
THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THE AUTOBOTS IS THAT THE AUTOBOTS WENT BACK TO COLLECT THEIR DEAD.
STILL. DON'T SUPPOSE IT MATTERS NOW.
REALLY? HOW COME?
WELL, BECAUSE—BECAUSE THE WAR'S *OVER*.
HEH.

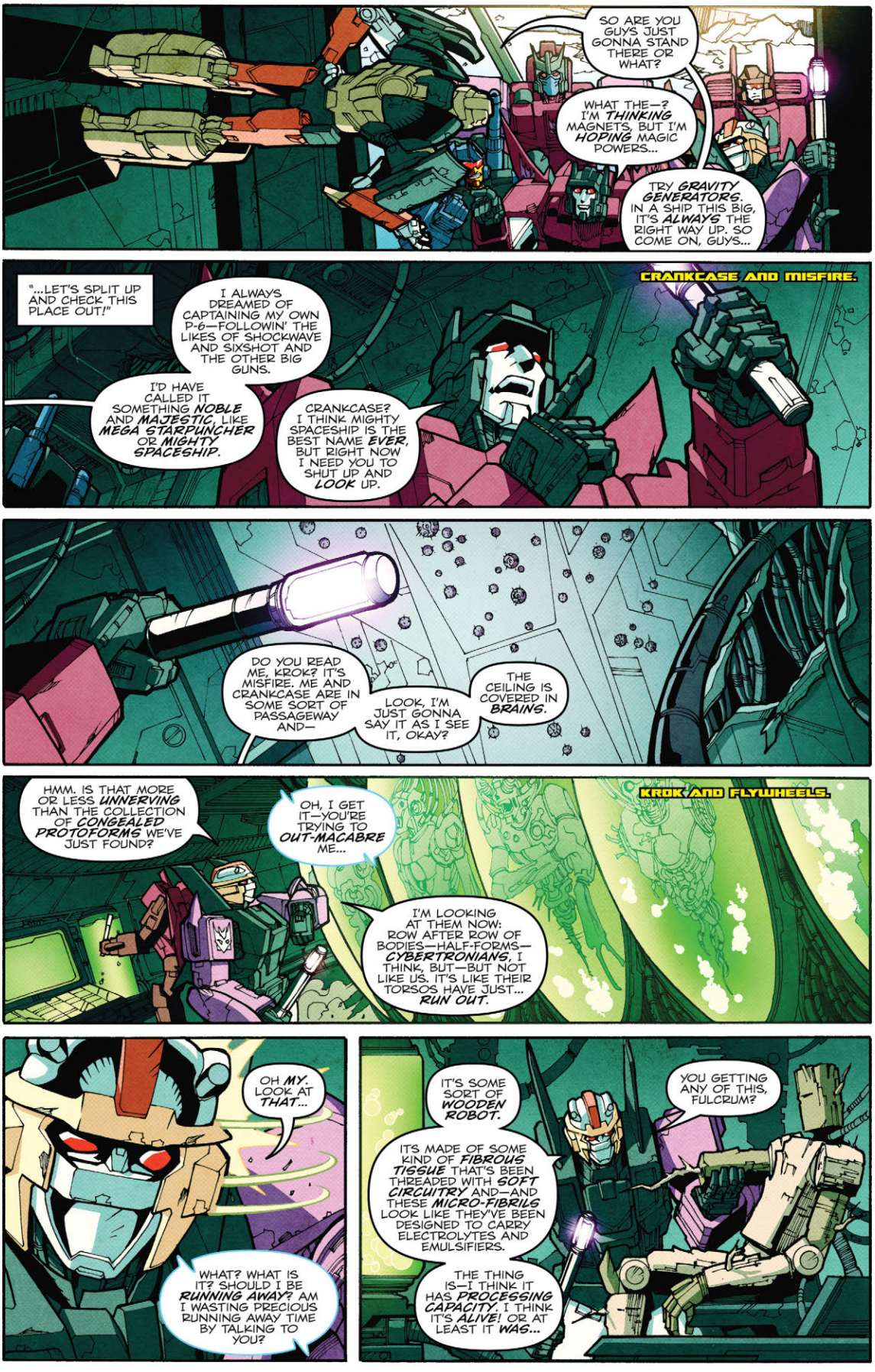

!!!
NO, WAIT, WHAT?
OUR WAR? OUR WAR'S OVER? AS IN PROPERLY OVER?
BUT THAT'S—
I KNOW.
WHEN? HOW?
WE RECEIVED A MESSAGE—ALL OF US, AT THE SAME TIME: "THE FIGHTING'S STOPPED. COME HOME."
BUT THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN A WAR! THAT'S LIKE SAYING THERE'S NO MORE BLUE, OR—OR THE WEATHER'S STOPPED!
DID WE WIN?
WE THINK—
WE DON'T KNOW, BUT WE'RE GUESSING—
WE'RE GUESSING PROBABLY THE AUTOBOTS WON.
YOU KNOW, JUST—JUST BECAUSE.
IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN I GUESS—
-SIGH-
ACTUALLY, I DON'T KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT THAT.
I MEAN DON'T GET STRESSED ABOUT IT—WE COULD BE WRONG. WE MIGHT TOTALLY HAVE WON.
...WHAT WAS THE PLAN AFTER THE WAR ENDED?
EVEN AS WE SPEAK, MEGATRON COULD BE STANDING ON TOP OF NOVA PEAK LIKE HE DID ON DECLARATION DAY AND TELLING EVERYONE HOW, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, WE CAN FINALLY, ER...

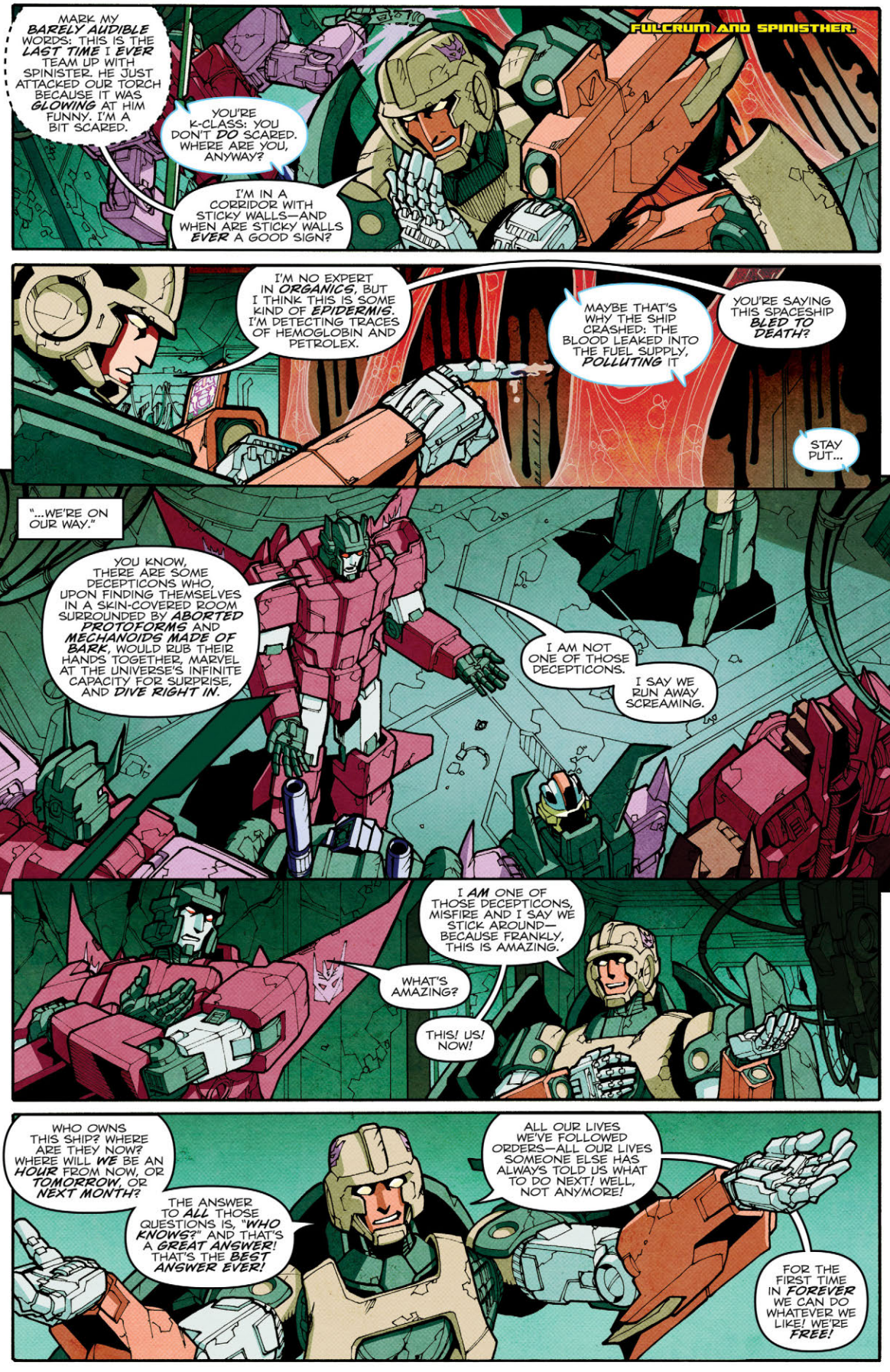

THE LEGENDARY PHASE SEVEN: REPOPULATION.
SO WE SPEND ALL THAT TIME KILLIN' EACH OTHER JUST SO WE CAN REBUILD OUR RACE?
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A DECEPTICON, CRANKCASE? IT'S A BIT LATE TO START QUESTIONING THE GRAND PLAN.
ER, SPINISTER...? WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
THE FIRE'S GIVING ME WEIRD LOOKS, KROK. I THINK I'M GONNA SHOOT IT.
WELL, WELL— A STRAGGLER. AND I THINK HE'S TRYING TO SPEAK.
P—P—P—
THAT'S PROBABLY AUTOBOT FOR "PLEASE DON'T KILL ME."
BUT THE WAR'S OVER...
REALLY?
I HADN'T HEARD.
CHOOM CHOOM CHOOM
CLEMENCY.

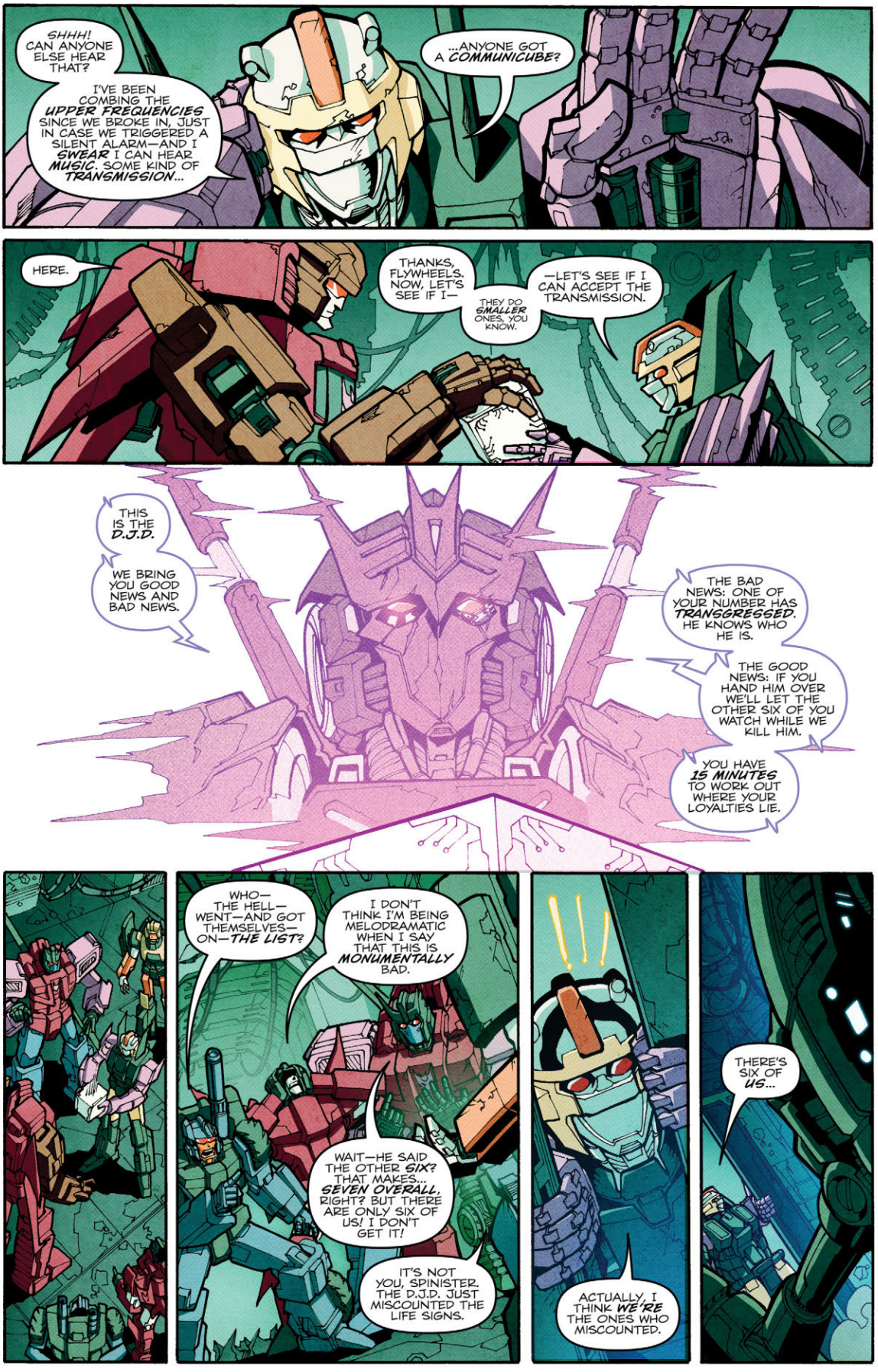
THE LOST LIGHT.

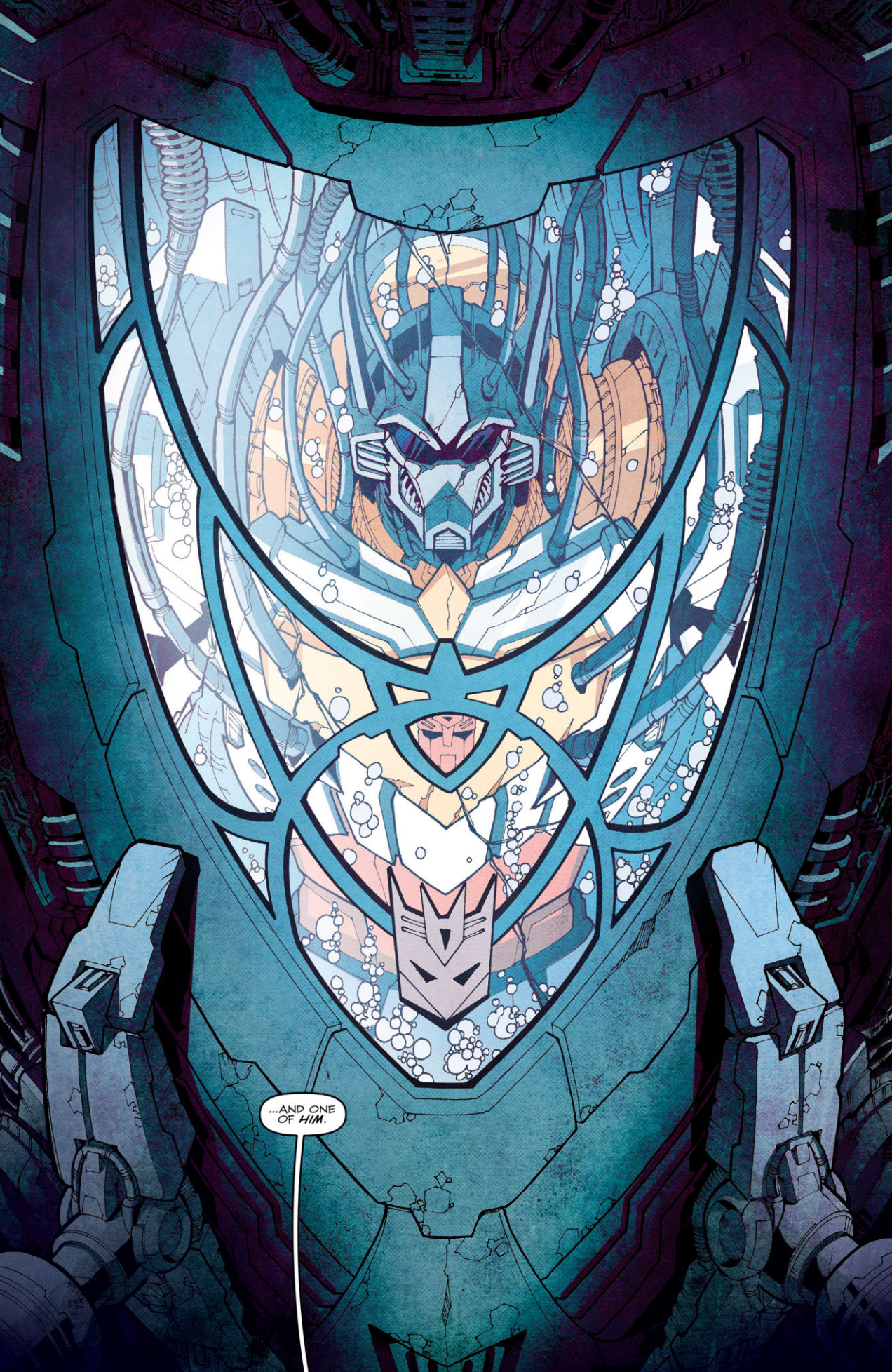

SO MANY DEAD.
I KNOW—IF WE COULD COLLECT EVEN HALF A GALLON'S WORTH OF INNERMOST ENERGON WE COULD POWER THE W.A.P. FOR MONTHS!
KLIK
THE WEAK ANTHROPIC PRINCIPLE IS A WEIRD NAME FOR A SHIP—AND PLEASE, WHAT'S WITH THE CLICKING?
?
THE SHIP'S COMMUNICATIONS SUITE KEEPS FLATLINING, AND THIS KEEPS REBOOTING IT. I'M TRYING TO GET A MESSAGE TO MY—
OUTTA THE WAY, LOSERS!
THE HELL—?!
WHAT'S HE DOING?!
YOU EVER HEARD OF THE NECROBOT, FULCRUM?
THE MUTE NEUTRAL WHO ROAMS THE GALAXY ADMINISTERING POSTHUMOUS RITES? WHO CAN DETERMINE CAUSE OF DEATH JUST BY LETTING HIS SHADOW FALL ON THE CORPSE?
WHO HAS DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO RECORDING THE FATE OF EVERY LAST CYBERTRONIAN?
OKAY, SO YOU HAVE HEARD OF HIM.
I DON'T BELIEVE IN THE NECROBOT. SADLY, MISFIRE DOES.
WE'LL I HOPE YOU'VE NOT GOT MONEY ON IT, BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE MISFIRE'S ABOUT TO—
LOSE WHOEVER HE THINKS HE SAW. TRUST ME, THIS ALWAYS HAPPENS. THREE, TWO, ONE...
I'VE LOST HIM!
WAIT—
WHAT THE FLYWHEELS IS THAT?
GUYS! I'VE FOUND A SHIP! A DECEPTICON SHIP!
YOU SURE IT'S A DECEPTICON SHIP?

PRETTY SURE.
A SYMBOL SHIP. A FRIKKIN' SYMBOL SHIP.
TECHNICALLY A D-CLASS WORLDSWEEPER. A P-6 MODEL, FAMOUS FOR... DAMN, WHAT WAS IT?
CRASHING?
CAN I KEEP IT, KROK? CAN I?
THIS TAKES ME BACK—BACK TO WHEN IT LOOKED LIKE WE WERE GOING TO WIN. A WORLDSWEEPER ABOVE EVERY PLANET IN THE CONSTELLATE, KEEPING WATCH...
THEY SAY OUR IMPERIAL PHASE ENDED WHEN THE LAST OF THE P-6S FLEW HOME.


SO ARE YOU GUYS JUST GONNA STAND THERE OR WHAT?
WHAT THE—? I'M THINKING MAGNETS, BUT I'M HOPING MAGIC POWERS...
TRY GRAVITY GENERATORS. IN A SHIP THIS BIG, IT'S ALWAYS THE RIGHT WAY UP. SO COME ON, GUYS...
CRANKCASE AND MISFIRE.
"...LET'S SPLIT UP AND CHECK THIS PLACE OUT!"
I ALWAYS DREAMED OF CAPTAINING MY OWN P-6—FOLLOWIN' THE LIKES OF SHOCKWAVE AND SIXSHOT AND THE OTHER BIG GUNS.
I'D HAVE CALLED IT SOMETHING NOBLE AND MAJESTIC, LIKE MEGA STARPUNCHER OR MIGHTY SPACESHIP.
CRANKCASE? I THINK MIGHTY SPACESHIP IS THE BEST NAME EVER, BUT RIGHT NOW I NEED YOU TO SHUT UP AND LOOK UP.
DO YOU READ ME, KROK? IT'S MISFIRE. ME AND CRANKCASE ARE IN SOME SORT OF PASSAGEWAY AND—
LOOK, I'M JUST GONNA SAY IT AS I SEE IT, OKAY?
THE CEILING IS COVERED IN BRAINS.
KROK AND FLYWHEELS.
HMM. IS THAT MORE OR LESS UNNERVING THAN THE COLLECTION OF CONGEALED PROTOFORMS WE'VE JUST FOUND?
OH, I GET IT—YOU'RE TRYING TO OUT-MACABRE ME...
I'M LOOKING AT THEM NOW: ROW AFTER ROW OF BODIES—HALF-FORMS—CYBERTRONIANS, I THINK, BUT—BUT NOT LIKE US. IT'S LIKE THEIR TORSOS HAVE JUST... RUN OUT.
OH MY. LOOK AT THAT...
WHAT? WHAT IS IT? SHOULD I BE RUNNING AWAY? AM I WASTING PRECIOUS RUNNING AWAY TIME BY TALKING TO YOU?
IT'S SOME SORT OF WOODEN ROBOT.
IT'S MADE OF SOME KIND OF FIBROUS TISSUE THAT'S BEEN THREADED WITH SOFT CIRCUITRY AND—AND THESE MICRO-FIBRILS LOOK LIKE THEY'VE BEEN DESIGNED TO CARRY ELECTROLYTES AND EMULSIFIERS.
THE THING IS—I THINK IT HAS PROCESSING CAPACITY. I THINK IT'S ALIVE! OR AT LEAST IT WAS...
YOU GETTING ANY OF THIS, FULCRUM?


FULCRUM AND SPINISTHER.
MARK MY BARELY AUDIBLE WORDS: THIS IS THE LAST TIME I EVER TEAM UP WITH SPINISTER. HE JUST ATTACKED OUR TORCH BECAUSE IT WAS GLOWING AT HIM FUNNY. I'M A BIT SCARED.
YOU'RE K-CLASS: YOU DON'T DO SCARED. WHERE ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
I'M IN A CORRIDOR WITH STICKY WALLS—AND WHEN ARE STICKY WALLS EVER A GOOD SIGN?
I'M NO EXPERT IN ORGANICS, BUT I THINK THIS IS SOME KIND OF EPIDERMIS. I'M DETECTING TRACES OF HEMOGLOBIN AND PETROLEX.
MAYBE THAT'S WHY THE SHIP CRASHED: THE BLOOD LEAKED INTO THE FUEL SUPPLY, POLLUTING IT
YOU'RE SAYING THIS SPACESHIP BLED TO DEATH?
STAY PUT...
"...WE'RE ON OUR WAY."
YOU KNOW, THERE ARE SOME DECEPTICONS WHO, UPON FINDING THEMSELVES IN A SKIN-COVERED ROOM SURROUNDED BY ABORTED PROTOFORMS AND MECHANOIDS MADE OF BARK, WOULD RUB THEIR HANDS TOGETHER, MARVEL AT THE UNIVERSE'S INFINITE CAPACITY FOR SURPRISE, AND DIVE RIGHT IN.
I AM NOT ONE OF THOSE DECEPTICONS.
I SAY WE RUN AWAY SCREAMING.
I AM ONE OF THOSE DECEPTICONS, MISFIRE AND I SAY WE STICK AROUND—BECAUSE FRANKLY, THIS IS AMAZING.
WHAT'S AMAZING?
THIS! US! NOW!
WHO OWNS THIS SHIP? WHERE ARE THEY NOW? WHERE WILL WE BE AN HOUR FROM NOW, OR TOMORROW, OR NEXT MONTH?
THE ANSWER TO ALL THOSE QUESTIONS IS, "WHO KNOWS?" AND THAT'S A GREAT ANSWER! THAT'S THE BEST ANSWER EVER!
ALL OUR LIVES WE'VE FOLLOWED ORDERS—ALL OUR LIVES SOMEONE ELSE HAS ALWAYS TOLD US WHAT TO DO NEXT! WELL, NOT ANYMORE!
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FOREVER WE CAN DO WHATEVER WE LIKE! WE'RE FREE!

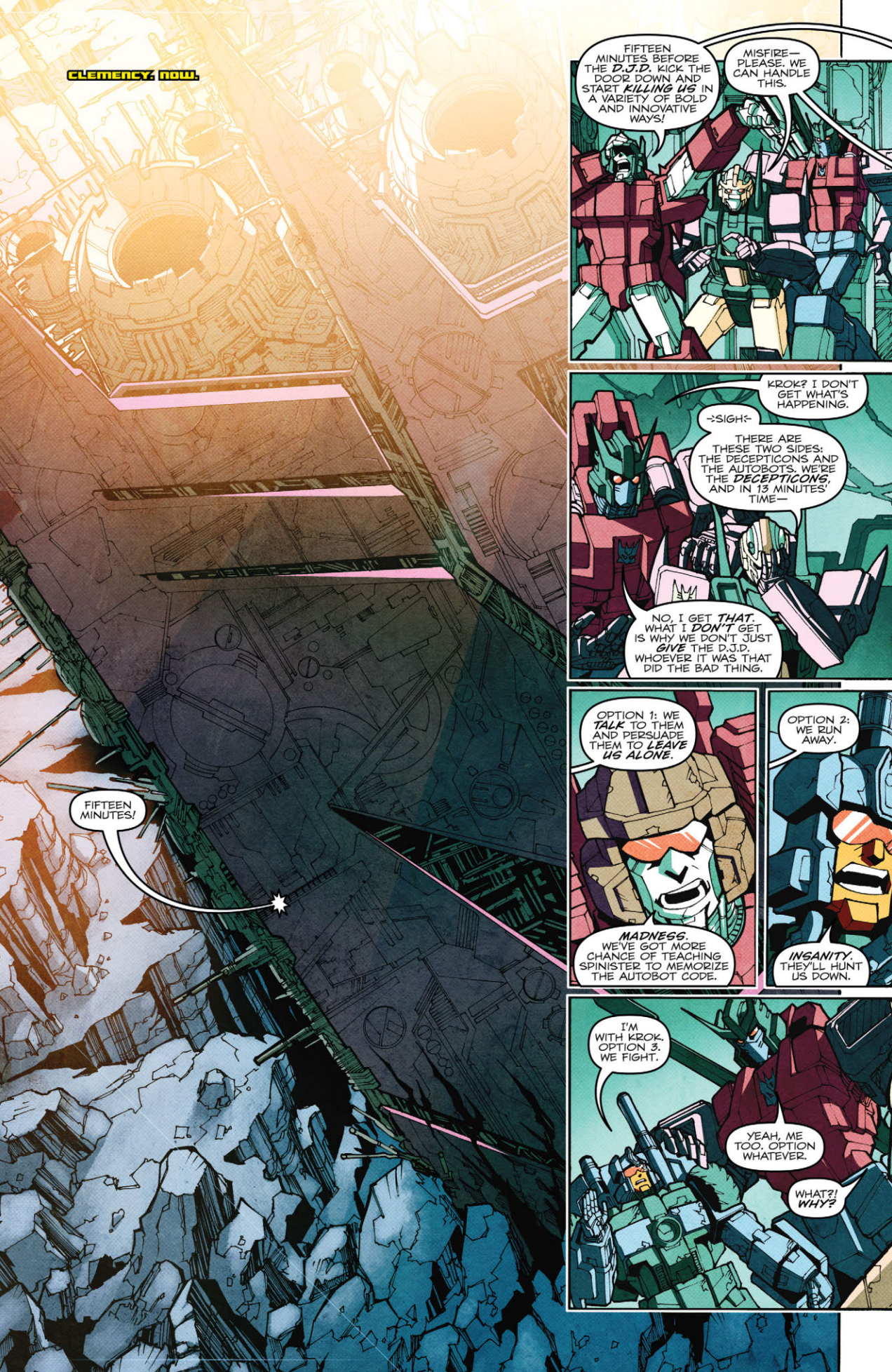

SHHH! CAN ANYONE ELSE HEAR THAT?
I'VE BEEN COMBING THE UPPER FREQUENCIES SINCE WE BROKE IN, JUST IN CASE WE TRIGGERED A SILENT ALARM—AND I SWEAR I CAN HEAR MUSIC. SOME KIND OF TRANSMISSION...
...ANYONE GOT A COMMUNICUBE?
HERE.
THANKS, FLYWHEELS. NOW, LET'S SEE IF I—
THEY DO SMALLER ONES, YOU KNOW.
—LET'S SEE IF I CAN ACCEPT THE TRANSMISSION.
THIS IS THE D.J.D.
WE BRING YOU GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS.
THE BAD NEWS: ONE OF YOUR NUMBER HAS TRANSGRESSED. HE KNOWS WHO HE IS.
THE GOOD NEWS: IF YOU HAND HIM OVER WE'LL LET THE OTHER SIX OF YOU WATCH WHILE WE KILL HIM.
YOU HAVE 15 MINUTES TO WORK OUT WHERE YOUR LOYALTIES LIE.
WHO—THE HELL—WENT—AND GOT THEMSELVES—ON—THE LIST?
I DON'T THINK I'M BEING MELODRAMATIC WHEN I SAY THAT THIS IS MONUMENTALLY BAD.
WAIT—HE SAID THE OTHER SIX? THAT MAKES... SEVEN OVERALL, RIGHT? BUT THERE ARE ONLY SIX OF US! I DON'T GET IT!
IT'S NOT YOU, SPINISTER. THE D.J.D. JUST MISCOUNTED THE LIFE SIGNS.
ACTUALLY, I THINK WE'RE THE ONES WHO MISCOUNTED.
THERE'S SIX OF US...

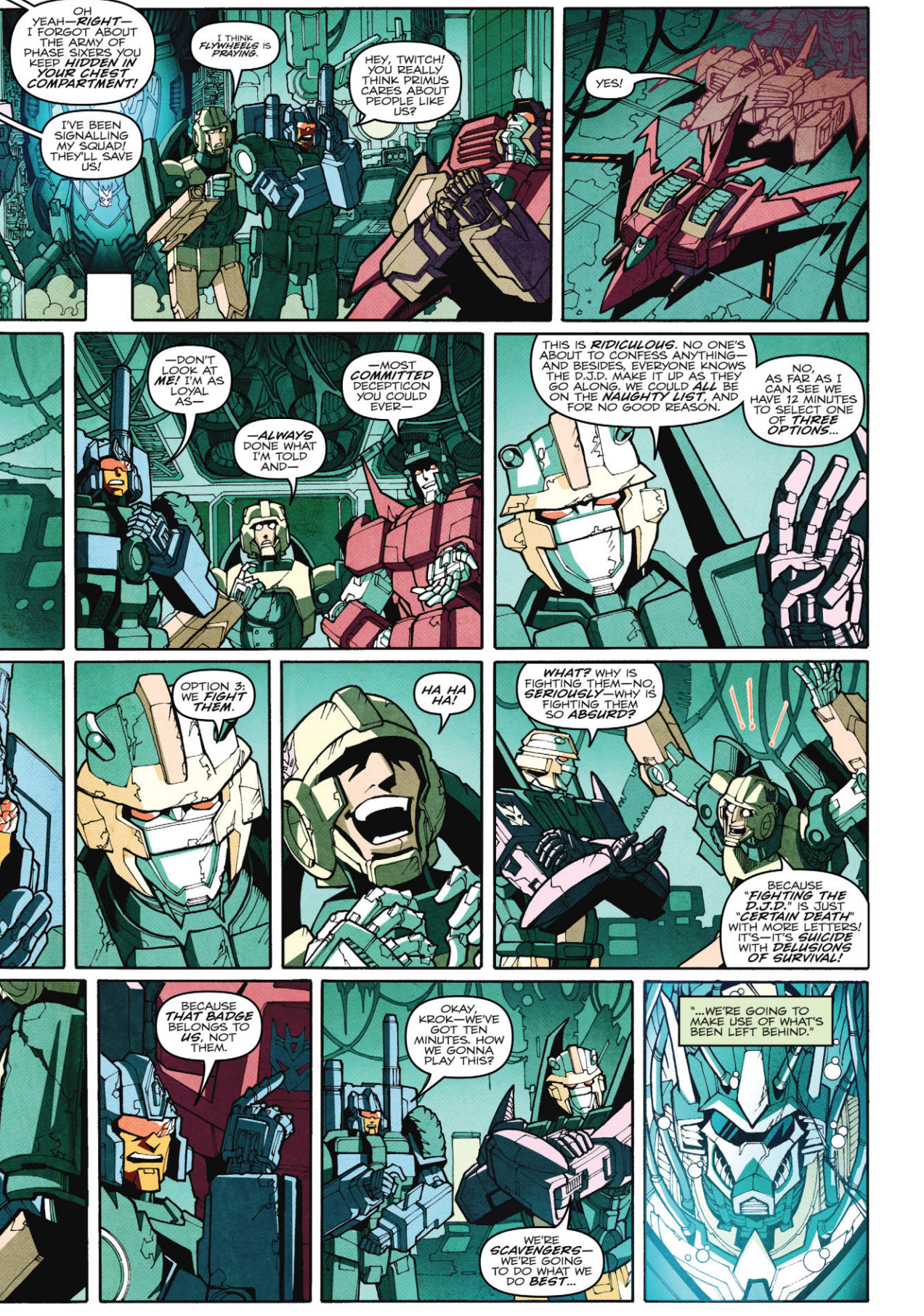

...AND ONE OF *HIM*.

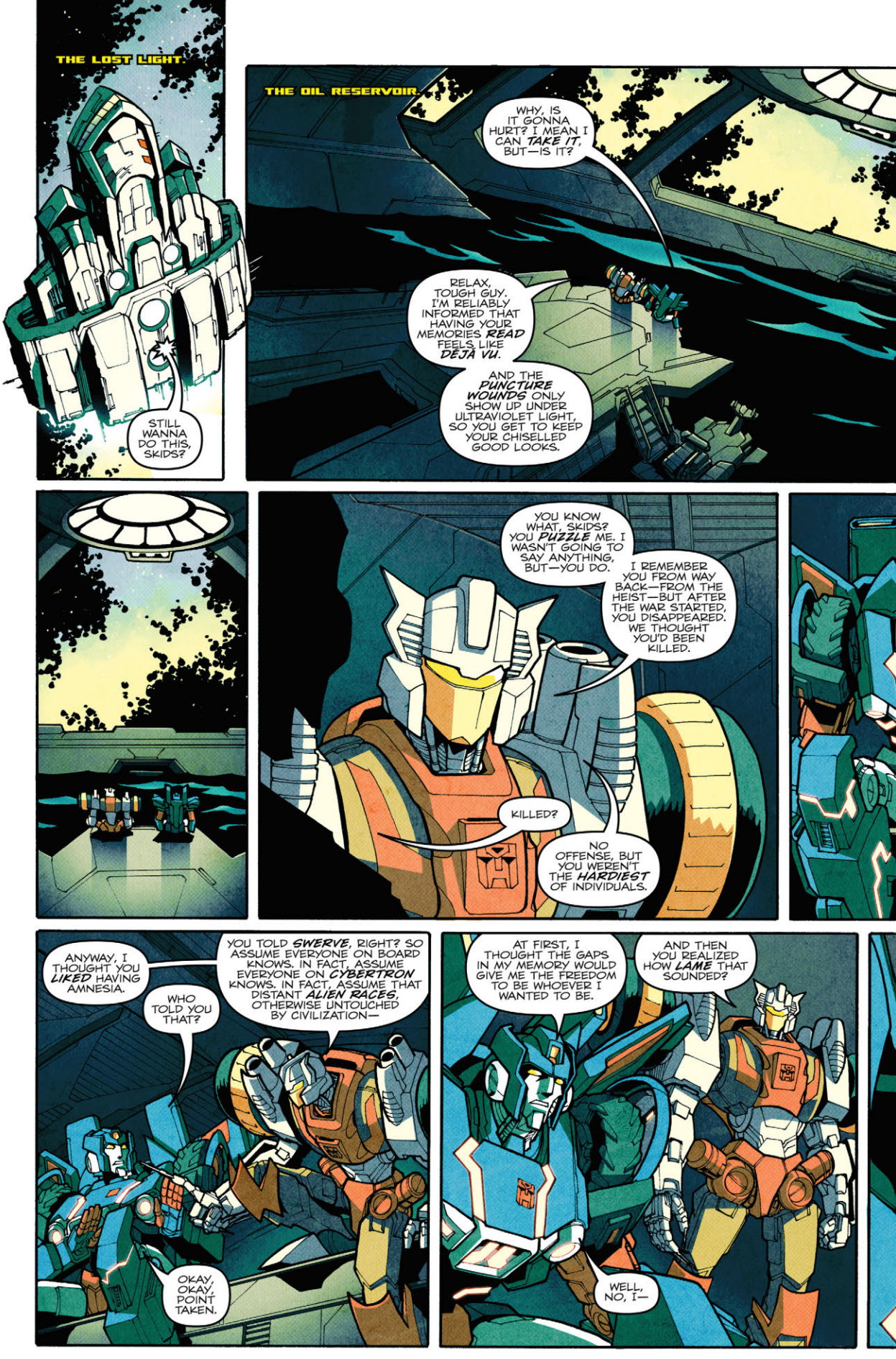
□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #7 COVER B
BY **NICK ROCHE** COLORS BY **JOSH BURCHAM**

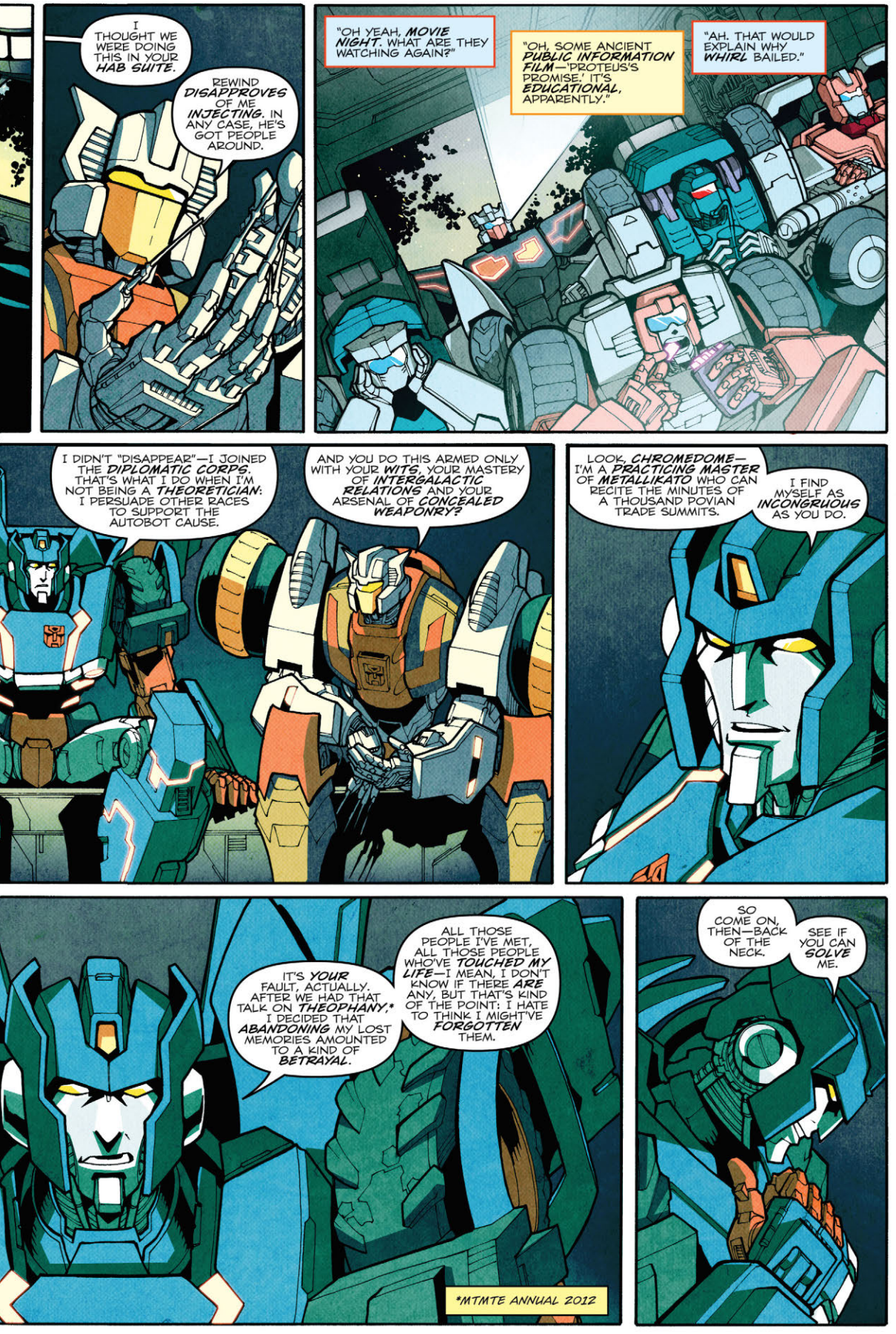
□ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #8 COVER A
BY **ALEX MILNE** COLORS BY **JOANA LAFUENTE**

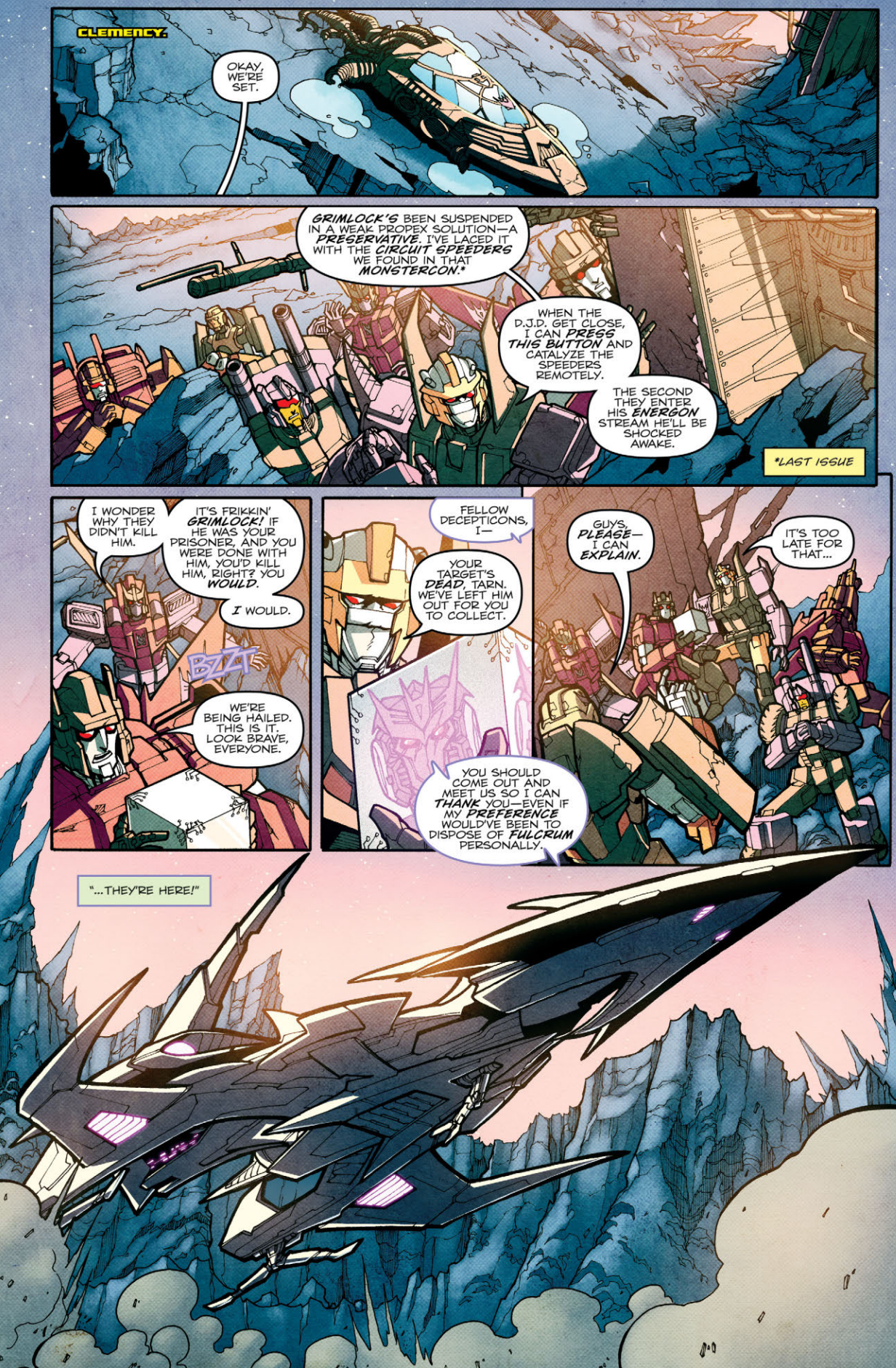
10,000 FEET ABOVE CLEMENCY.
YEARS AGO.
APPROACHING TARGET AREA.
DROP IN T-MINUS 60 SECONDS.
IT'S FULCRUM, RIGHT? I'M TORQUE.
YOU WEREN'T IN TRAINING, WERE YOU? CHIN LIKE THAT, I'D HAVE REMEMBERED.
THIS YOUR FIRST TIME?
SORRY—BIT OF K-CLASS HUMOR THERE. JUST VERY EXCITED TO BE HERE. SUPER, SUPER EXCITED.
POSITIONS, EVERYONE.
REMEMBER—YOU DO THIS FOR THE GLORY OF THE DECEPTICONS!
FOR THE DECEPTICONS!
SCAVENGERS (PART 2):
WHO'S AFRAID OF THE DJD?

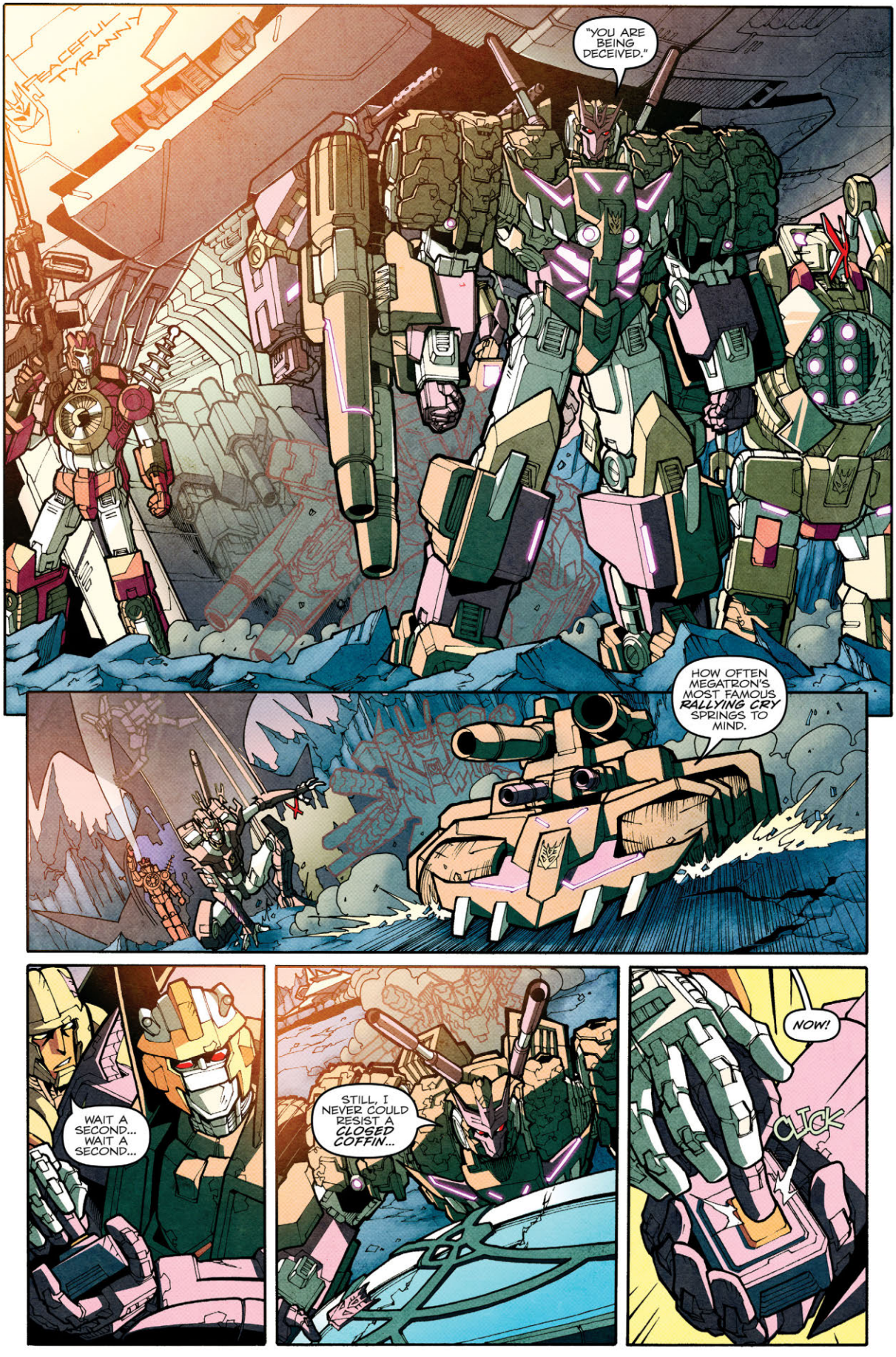

CLEMENCY. NOW.
FIFTEEN MINUTES!
FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE THE D.J.D. KICK THE DOOR DOWN AND START KILLING US IN A VARIETY OF BOLD AND INNOVATIVE WAYS!
MISFIRE—PLEASE. WE CAN HANDLE THIS.
KROK? I DON'T GET WHAT'S HAPPENING.
-SIGH-
THERE ARE THESE TWO SIDES: THE DECEPTICONS AND THE AUTOBOTS. WE'RE THE DECEPTICONS, AND IN 13 MINUTES' TIME—
NO, I GET THAT. WHAT I DON'T GET IS WHY WE DON'T JUST GIVE THE D.J.D. WHOEVER IT WAS THAT DID THE BAD THING.
OPTION 1: WE TALK TO THEM AND PERSUADE THEM TO LEAVE US ALONE.
MADNESS. WE'VE GOT MORE CHANCE OF TEACHING SPINISTER TO MEMORIZE THE AUTOBOT CODE.
OPTION 2: WE RUN AWAY.
INSANITY. THEY'LL HUNT US DOWN.
I'M WITH KROK. OPTION 3. WE FIGHT.
YEAH, ME TOO. OPTION WHATEVER.
WHAT?! WHY?


OH YEAH—*RIGHT*—I FORGOT ABOUT THE ARMY OF PHASE SIXERS YOU KEEP *HIDDEN IN YOUR CHEST COMPARTMENT!*
I'VE BEEN SIGNALLING MY SQUAD! THEY'LL SAVE US!
I THINK *FLYWHEELS* IS *PRAYING.*
HEY, TWITCH! YOU REALLY THINK PRIMUS CARES ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE US?
YES!
—DON'T LOOK AT *ME!* I'M AS LOYAL AS—
—*ALWAYS* DONE WHAT I'M TOLD AND—
—MOST *COMMITTED* DECEPTICON YOU COULD EVER—
THIS IS *RIDICULOUS*. NO ONE'S ABOUT TO CONFESS ANYTHING—AND BESIDES, EVERYONE KNOWS THE D.J.D. MAKE IT UP AS THEY GO ALONG. WE COULD *ALL* BE ON THE *NAUGHTY LIST*, AND FOR NO GOOD REASON.
NO, AS FAR AS I CAN SEE WE HAVE 12 MINUTES TO SELECT ONE OF *THREE OPTIONS*...
OPTION 3: WE *FIGHT THEM.*
HA HA HA!
WHAT? WHY IS FIGHTING THEM—NO, *SERIOUSLY*—WHY IS FIGHTING THEM SO *ABSURD?*
BECAUSE "*FIGHTING THE D.J.D.*" IS JUST "*CERTAIN DEATH*" WITH MORE LETTERS! IT'S—IT'S *SUICIDE* WITH *DELUSIONS OF SURVIVAL!*
BECAUSE *THAT BADGE* BELONGS TO *US*, NOT THEM.
OKAY, KROK—WE'VE GOT TEN MINUTES. HOW WE GONNA PLAY THIS?
WE'RE *SCAVENGERS*—WE'RE GOING TO DO WHAT WE DO *BEST*...
"...WE'RE GOING TO MAKE USE OF WHAT'S BEEN LEFT BEHIND."


THE LOST LIGHT.
STILL WANNA DO THIS, SKIDS?
THE OIL RESERVOIR.
WHY, IS IT GONNA HURT? I MEAN I CAN *TAKE IT*, BUT—IS IT?
RELAX, TOUGH GUY. I'M RELIABLY INFORMED THAT HAVING YOUR MEMORIES *READ* FEELS LIKE *DÉJÀ VU*.
AND THE *PUNCTURE WOUNDS* ONLY SHOW UP UNDER ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT, SO YOU GET TO KEEP YOUR CHISELLED GOOD LOOKS.
YOU KNOW WHAT, SKIDS? YOU *PUZZLE* ME. I WASN'T GOING TO SAY ANYTHING, BUT—YOU DO.
I REMEMBER YOU FROM WAY BACK—FROM THE HEIST—BUT AFTER THE WAR STARTED, YOU DISAPPEARED. WE THOUGHT YOU'D BEEN KILLED.
KILLED?
NO OFFENSE, BUT YOU WEREN'T THE *HARDIEST* OF INDIVIDUALS.
ANYWAY, I THOUGHT YOU *LIKED* HAVING AMNESIA.
WHO TOLD YOU THAT?
YOU TOLD *SWERVE*, RIGHT? SO ASSUME EVERYONE ON BOARD KNOWS. IN FACT, ASSUME EVERYONE ON *CYBERTRON* KNOWS. IN FACT, ASSUME THAT DISTANT *ALIEN RACES*, OTHERWISE UNTOUCHED BY CIVILIZATION—
OKAY, OKAY, POINT TAKEN.
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THE GAPS IN MY MEMORY WOULD GIVE ME THE FREEDOM TO BE WHOEVER I WANTED TO BE.
AND THEN YOU REALIZED HOW *LAME* THAT SOUNDED?
WELL, NO, I—

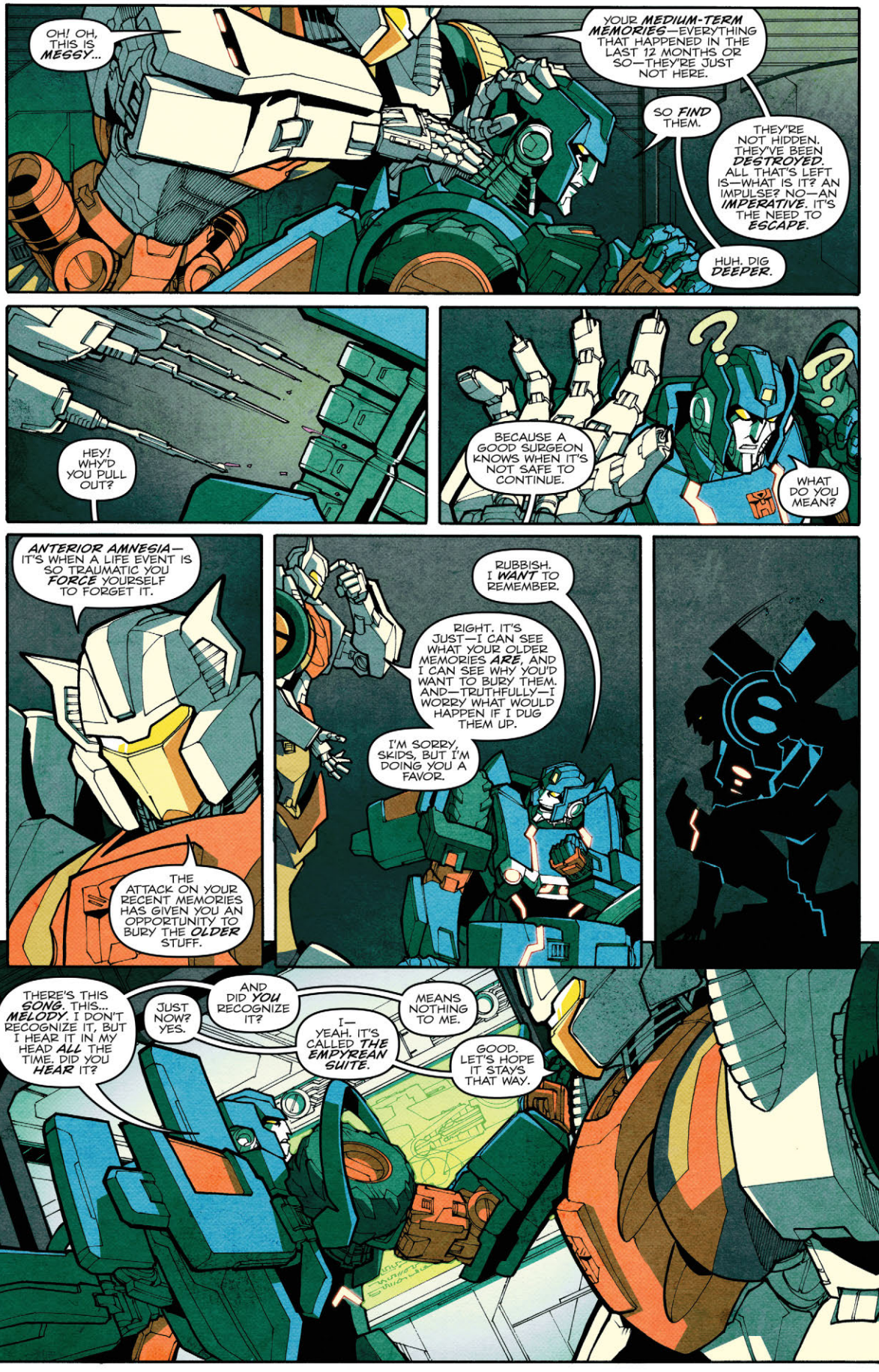

I THOUGHT WE WERE DOING THIS IN YOUR HAB SUITE.
REWIND DISAPPROVES OF ME INJECTING. IN ANY CASE, HE'S GOT PEOPLE AROUND.
"OH YEAH, MOVIE NIGHT. WHAT ARE THEY WATCHING AGAIN?"
"OH, SOME ANCIENT PUBLIC INFORMATION FILM—'PROTEUS'S PROMISE.' IT'S EDUCATIONAL, APPARENTLY."
"AH. THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY WHIRL BAILED."
I DIDN'T "DISAPPEAR"—I JOINED THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. THAT'S WHAT I DO WHEN I'M NOT BEING A THEORETICIAN: I PERSUADE OTHER RACES TO SUPPORT THE AUTOBOT CAUSE.
AND YOU DO THIS ARMED ONLY WITH YOUR WITS, YOUR MASTERY OF INTERGALACTIC RELATIONS AND YOUR ARSENAL OF CONCEALED WEAPONRY?
LOOK, CHROMEDOME—I'M A PRACTICING MASTER OF METALLIKATO WHO CAN RECITE THE MINUTES OF A THOUSAND POVIAN TRADE SUMMITS.
I FIND MYSELF AS INCONGRUOUS AS YOU DO.
IT'S YOUR FAULT, ACTUALLY. AFTER WE HAD THAT TALK ON THEOPHANY,* I DECIDED THAT ABANDONING MY LOST MEMORIES AMOUNTED TO A KIND OF BETRAYAL.
ALL THOSE PEOPLE I'VE MET, ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO'VE TOUCHED MY LIFE—I MEAN, I DON'T KNOW IF THERE ARE ANY, BUT THAT'S KIND OF THE POINT: I HATE TO THINK I MIGHT'VE FORGOTTEN THEM.
*MTMTE ANNUAL 2012
SO COME ON, THEN—BACK OF THE NECK.
SEE IF YOU CAN SOLVE ME.


CLEMENCY.
OKAY, WE'RE SET.
GRIMLOCK'S BEEN SUSPENDED IN A WEAK PROPEX SOLUTION—A PRESERVATIVE. I'VE LACED IT WITH THE CIRCUIT SPEEDERS WE FOUND IN THAT MONSTERCON.*
WHEN THE D.J.D. GET CLOSE, I CAN PRESS THIS BUTTON AND CATALYZE THE SPEEDERS REMOTELY.
THE SECOND THEY ENTER HIS ENERGON STREAM HE'LL BE SHOCKED AWAKE.
*LAST ISSUE
I WONDER WHY THEY DIDN'T KILL HIM.
IT'S FRIKKIN' GRIMLOCK! IF HE WAS YOUR PRISONER, AND YOU WERE DONE WITH HIM, YOU'D KILL HIM, RIGHT? YOU WOULD.
I WOULD.
BZZT
WE'RE BEING HAILED. THIS IS IT. LOOK BRAVE, EVERYONE.
FELLOW DECEPTICONS, I—
YOUR TARGET'S DEAD, TARN. WE'VE LEFT HIM OUT FOR YOU TO COLLECT.
YOU SHOULD COME OUT AND MEET US SO I CAN THANK YOU—EVEN IF MY PREFERENCE WOULD'VE BEEN TO DISPOSE OF FULCRUM PERSONALLY.
GUYS, PLEASE—I CAN EXPLAIN.
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT...
"...THEY'RE HERE!"

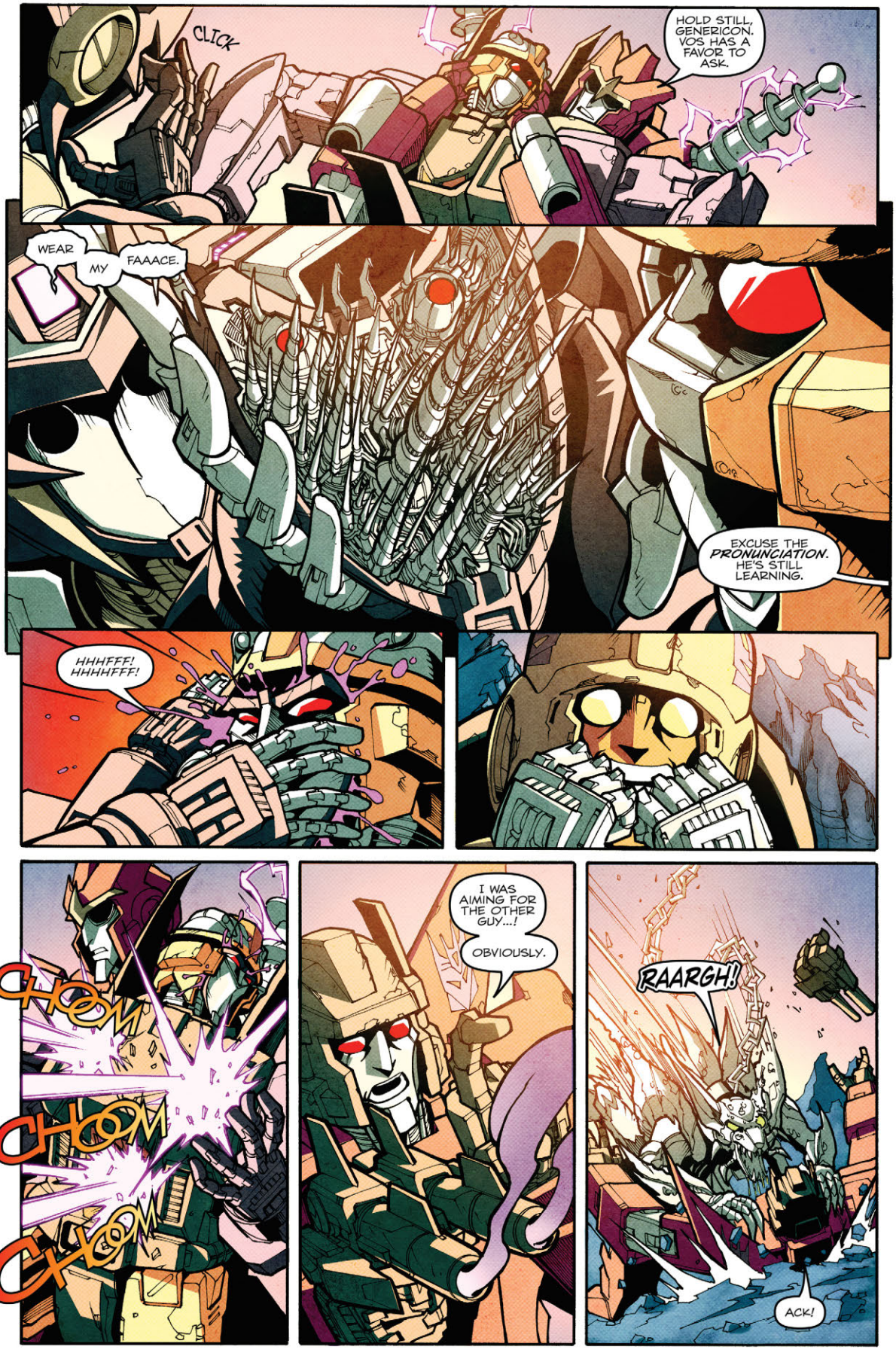

PEACEFUL TYRANNY
"YOU ARE BEING DECEIVED."
HOW OFTEN MEGATRON'S MOST FAMOUS *RALLYING CRY* SPRINGS TO MIND.
WAIT A SECOND... WAIT A SECOND...
STILL, I NEVER COULD RESIST A *CLOSED COFFIN*...
NOW!
CLICK

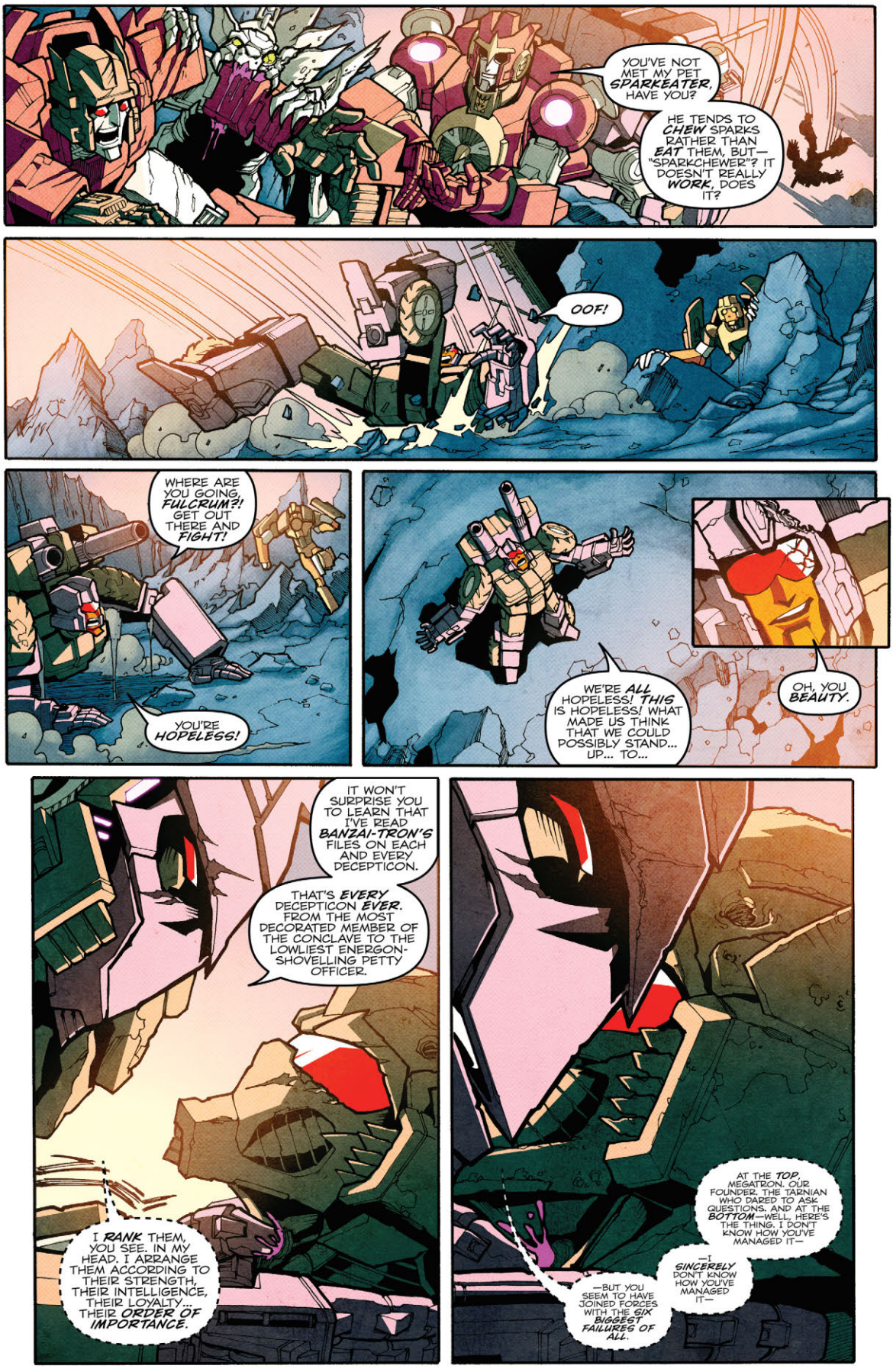
HURAARGH!!
THOK
HRRK!
KONK
C'MON, LET'S LEAVE THEM TO KILL EACH OTHER.
YOU KIDDING? I WANNA SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE END!

DOWN, DINOBOT.
THUNK
I'D FORGOTTEN HOW MUCH I HATE YOU.
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH GRIMLOCK. HE'S GETTING TIRED...
IT'S AN INTOXICATING FEELING.
OKAY, NOW WE SPLIT.
OH MISFIRE...
...YOUR TIMING IS AS BAD AS YOUR TARGETING.

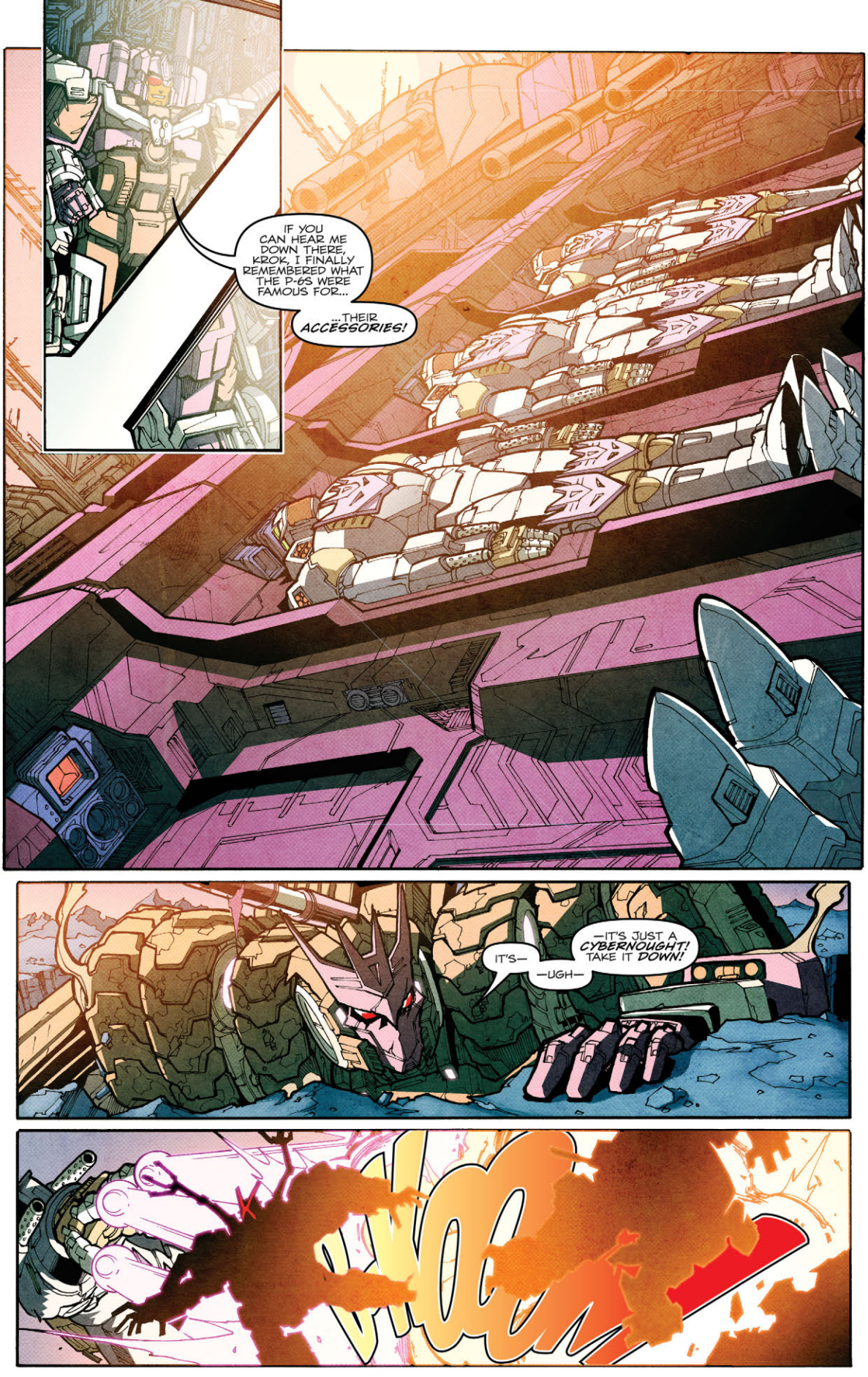

OH! OH, THIS IS MESSY...
YOUR MEDIUM-TERM MEMORIES—EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS OR SO—THEY'RE JUST NOT HERE.
SO FIND THEM.
THEY'RE NOT HIDDEN. THEY'VE BEEN DESTROYED. ALL THAT'S LEFT IS—WHAT IS IT? AN IMPULSE? NO—AN IMPERATIVE. IT'S THE NEED TO ESCAPE.
HUH. DIG DEEPER.
HEY! WHY'D YOU PULL OUT?
BECAUSE A GOOD SURGEON KNOWS WHEN IT'S NOT SAFE TO CONTINUE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
ANTERIOR AMNESIA—IT'S WHEN A LIFE EVENT IS SO TRAUMATIC YOU FORCE YOURSELF TO FORGET IT.
THE ATTACK ON YOUR RECENT MEMORIES HAS GIVEN YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO BURY THE OLDER STUFF.
RUBBISH. I WANT TO REMEMBER.
RIGHT. IT'S JUST—I CAN SEE WHAT YOUR OLDER MEMORIES ARE, AND I CAN SEE WHY YOU'D WANT TO BURY THEM. AND—TRUTHFULLY—I WORRY WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I DUG THEM UP.
I'M SORRY, SKIDS, BUT I'M DOING YOU A FAVOR.
THERE'S THIS SONG. THIS... MELODY. I DON'T RECOGNIZE IT, BUT I HEAR IT IN MY HEAD ALL THE TIME. DID YOU HEAR IT?
JUST NOW? YES.
AND DID YOU RECOGNIZE IT?
I— YEAH. IT'S CALLED THE EMPYREAN SUITE.
MEANS NOTHING TO ME.
GOOD. LET'S HOPE IT STAYS THAT WAY.

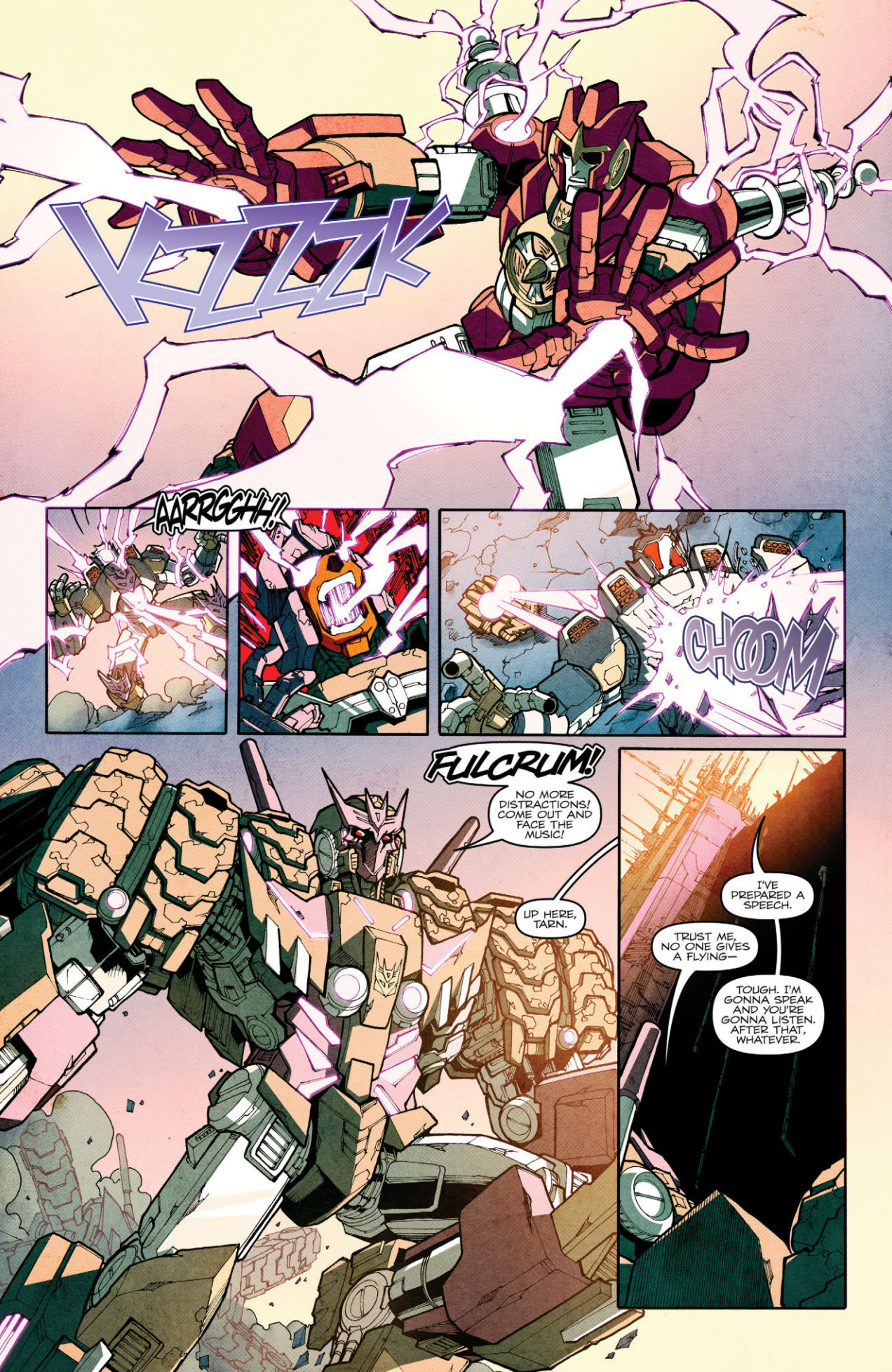
CLEMENCY.
STOP STRUGGLING AND COME INSIDE, FLYWHEELS.
PRIMUS SPARE MY SPARK. PRIMUS SPARE MY SPARK.
NO OFFENSE, BUT YOUR FEET ARE MASSIVE.
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO DO THIS HEAD FIRST.
PRIMUS SPARE MY SPARK!
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
FLYWHEELS!

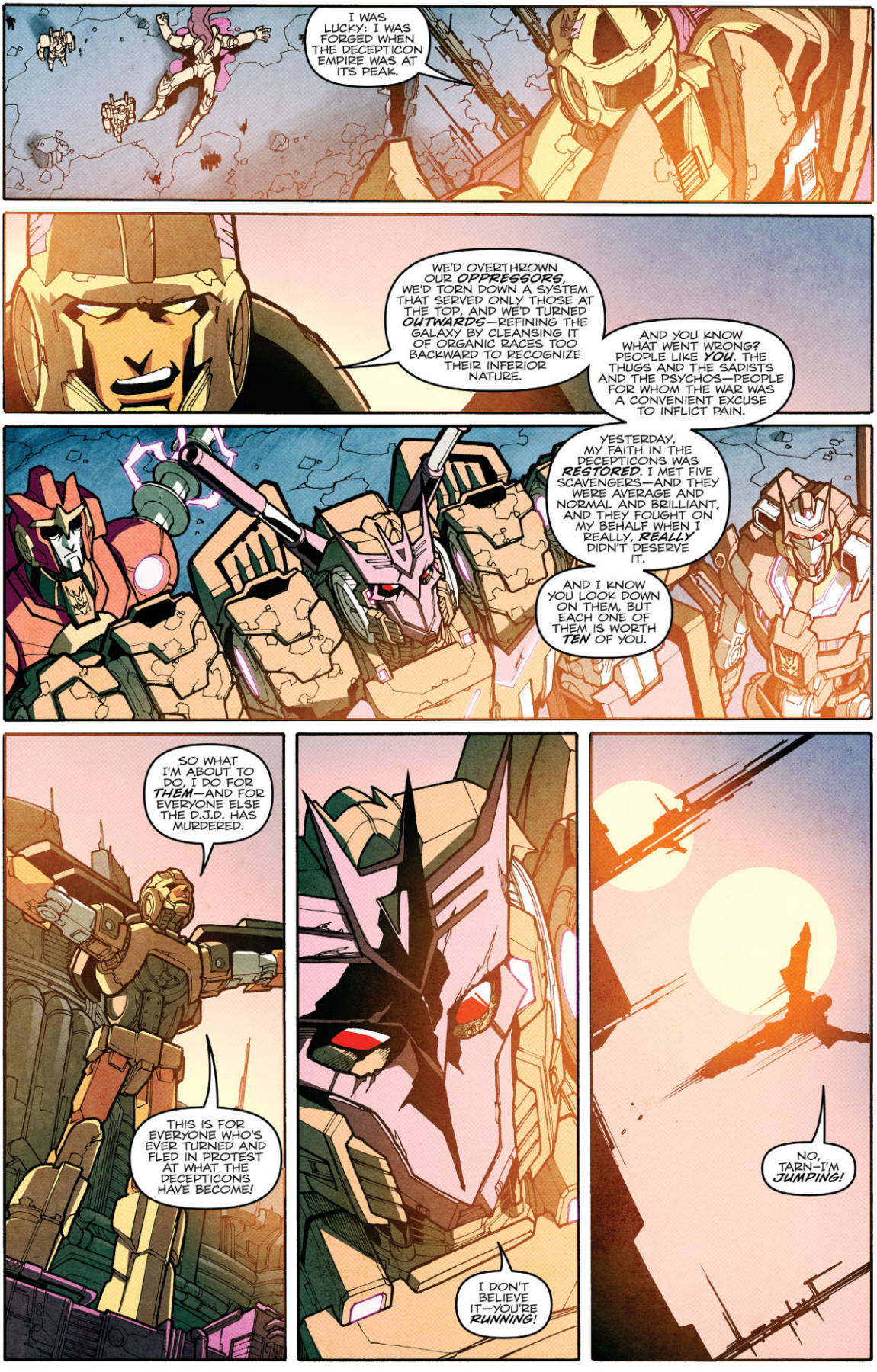

CLICK
HOLD STILL, GENERICON. VOS HAS A FAVOR TO ASK.
WEAR MY FAAACE.
EXCUSE THE *PRONUNCIATION*. HE'S STILL LEARNING.
HHHFFF! HHHHFFF!
CHOOM
CHOOM
CHOOM
I WAS AIMING FOR THE OTHER GUY...!
OBVIOUSLY.
RAARGH!
ACK!

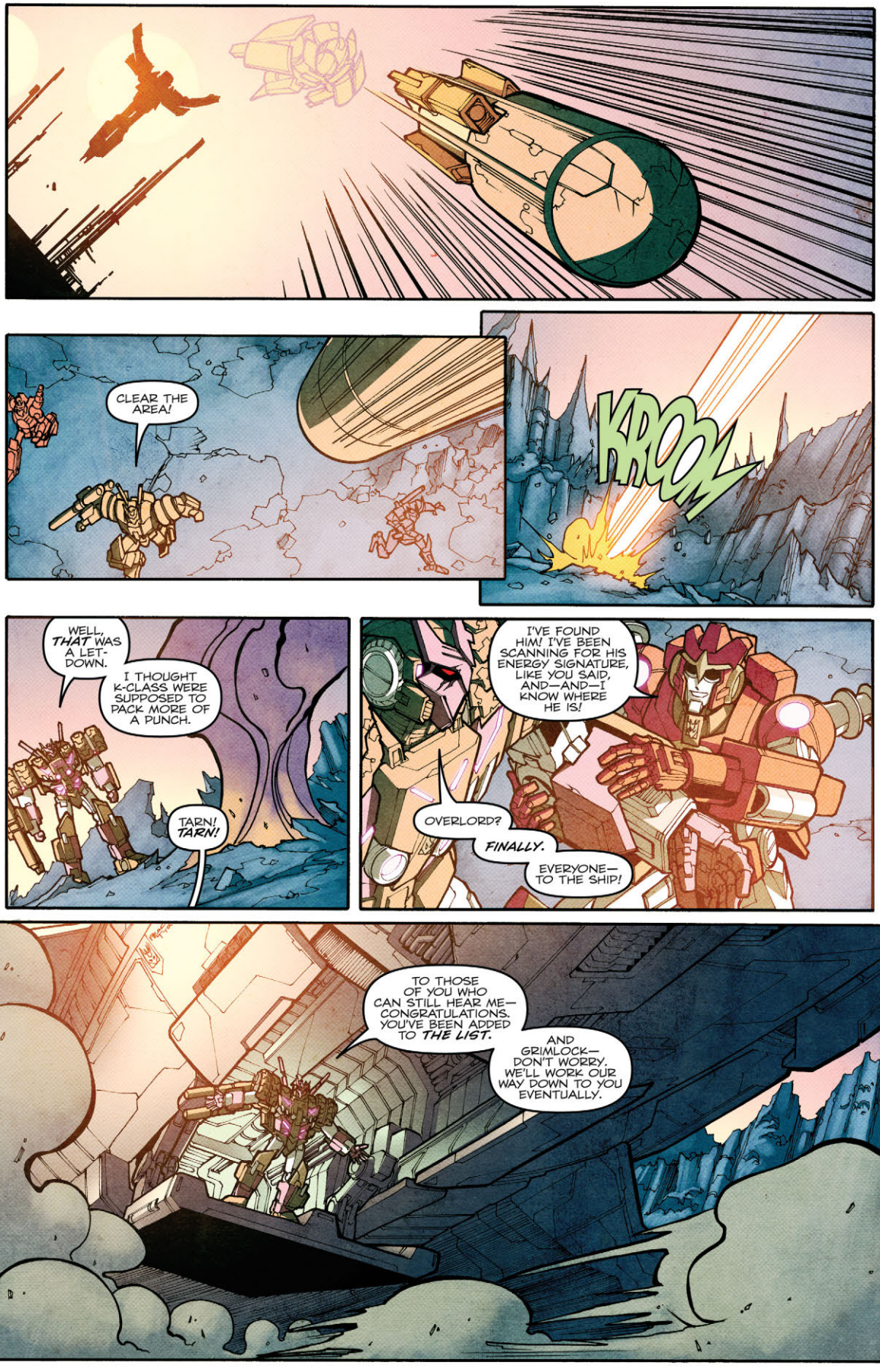

YOU'VE NOT MET MY PET SPARKEATER, HAVE YOU?
HE TENDS TO CHEW SPARKS RATHER THAN EAT THEM, BUT—"SPARKCHEWER"? IT DOESN'T REALLY WORK, DOES IT?
OOF!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, FULCRUM?! GET OUT THERE AND FIGHT!
YOU'RE HOPELESS!
WE'RE ALL HOPELESS! THIS IS HOPELESS! WHAT MADE US THINK THAT WE COULD POSSIBLY STAND... UP... TO...
OH, YOU BEAUTY.
IT WON'T SURPRISE YOU TO LEARN THAT I'VE READ BANZAI-TRON'S FILES ON EACH AND EVERY DECEPTICON.
THAT'S EVERY DECEPTICON EVER. FROM THE MOST DECORATED MEMBER OF THE CONCLAVE TO THE LOWLIEST ENERGON-SHOVELLING PETTY OFFICER.
I RANK THEM, YOU SEE. IN MY HEAD. I ARRANGE THEM ACCORDING TO THEIR STRENGTH, THEIR INTELLIGENCE, THEIR LOYALTY... THEIR ORDER OF IMPORTANCE.
AT THE TOP, MEGATRON. OUR FOUNDER. THE TARNIAN WHO DARED TO ASK QUESTIONS. AND AT THE BOTTOM—WELL, HERE'S THE THING. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'VE MANAGED IT—
—I SINCERELY DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'VE MANAGED IT—
—BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE JOINED FORCES WITH THE SIX BIGGEST FAILURES OF ALL.

KWAMM
STOUT-HEARTED DECEPTICONS AND D.J.D. SCUM! MAY I INTRODUCE...
...MIGHTY MEGA PUNCHER!
HRK...

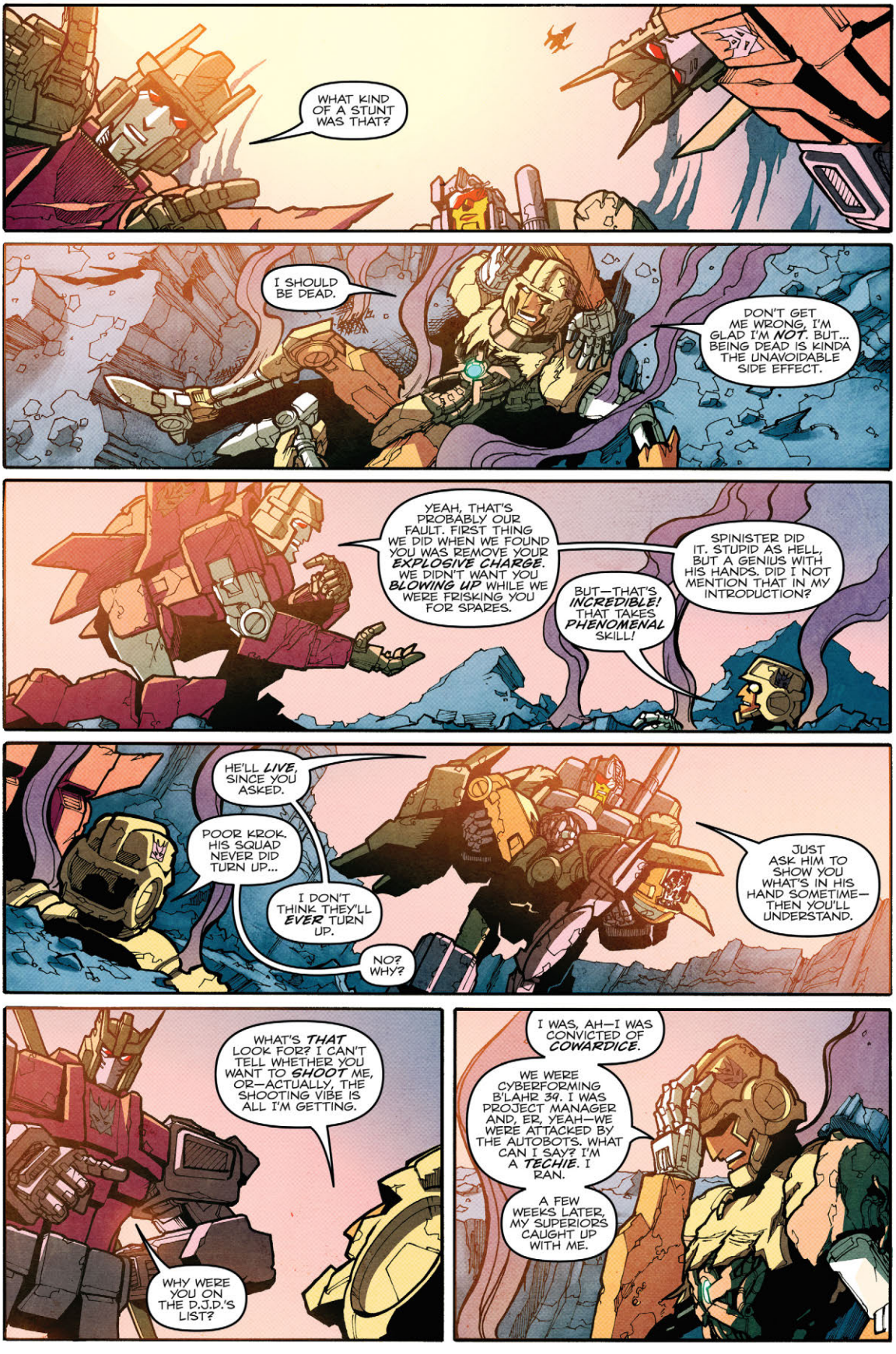

IF YOU CAN HEAR ME DOWN THERE, KROK, I FINALLY REMEMBERED WHAT THE P-6S WERE FAMOUS FOR...
...THEIR ACCESSORIES!
IT'S—
—UGH—
—IT'S JUST A CYBERNOUGHT! TAKE IT DOWN!
K
VOOM

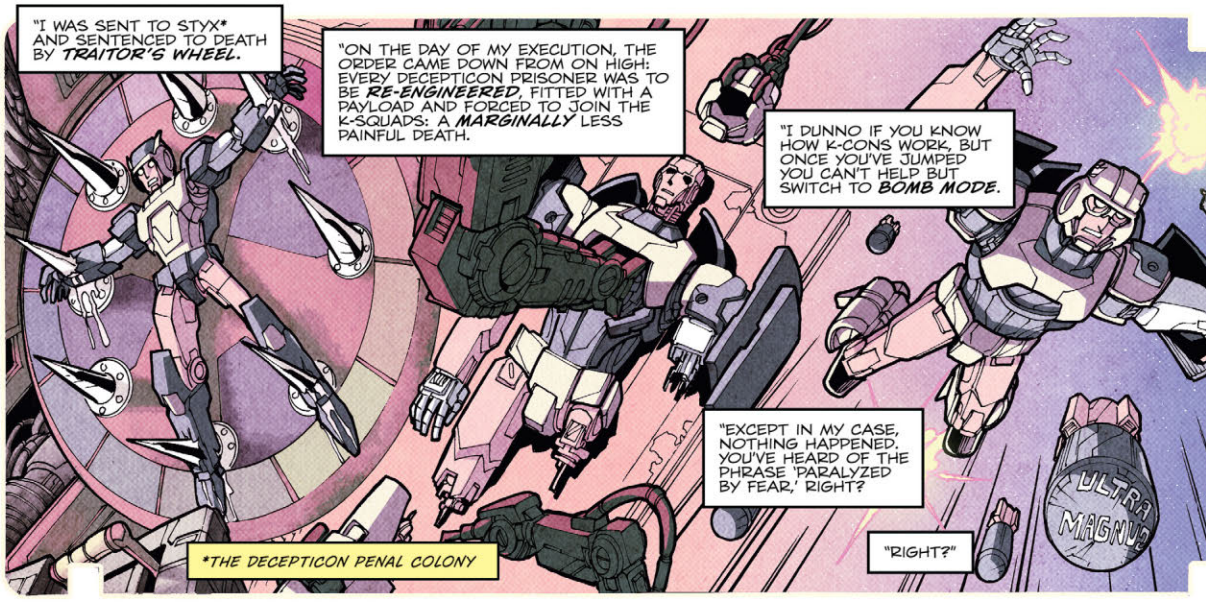

KRZZZK
AARRGGH!!
CHOOM
FULCRUM!
NO MORE DISTRACTIONS! COME OUT AND FACE THE MUSIC!
UP HERE, TARN.
I'VE PREPARED A SPEECH.
TRUST ME, NO ONE GIVES A FLYING—
TOUGH. I'M GONNA SPEAK AND YOU'RE GONNA LISTEN. AFTER THAT, WHATEVER.


I WAS LUCKY: I WAS FORGED WHEN THE DECEPTICON EMPIRE WAS AT ITS PEAK.
WE'D OVERTHROWN OUR OPPRESSORS, WE'D TORN DOWN A SYSTEM THAT SERVED ONLY THOSE AT THE TOP, AND WE'D TURNED OUTWARDS—REFINING THE GALAXY BY CLEANSING IT OF ORGANIC RACES TOO BACKWARD TO RECOGNIZE THEIR INFERIOR NATURE.
AND YOU KNOW WHAT WENT WRONG? PEOPLE LIKE YOU. THE THUGS AND THE SADISTS AND THE PSYCHOS—PEOPLE FOR WHOM THE WAR WAS A CONVENIENT EXCUSE TO INFLICT PAIN.
YESTERDAY, MY FAITH IN THE DECEPTICONS WAS RESTORED. I MET FIVE SCAVENGERS—AND THEY WERE AVERAGE AND NORMAL AND BRILLIANT, AND THEY FOUGHT ON MY BEHALF WHEN I REALLY, REALLY DIDN'T DESERVE IT.
AND I KNOW YOU LOOK DOWN ON THEM, BUT EACH ONE OF THEM IS WORTH TEN OF YOU.
SO WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO, I DO FOR THEM—AND FOR EVERYONE ELSE THE D.J.D. HAS MURDERED.
THIS IS FOR EVERYONE WHO'S EVER TURNED AND FLED IN PROTEST AT WHAT THE DECEPTICONS HAVE BECOME!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT—YOU'RE RUNNING!
NO, TARN—I'M JUMPING!


CLEAR THE AREA!
KROOM
WELL, THAT WAS A LET-DOWN.
I THOUGHT K-CLASS WERE SUPPOSED TO PACK MORE OF A PUNCH.
TARN! TARN!
I'VE FOUND HIM! I'VE BEEN SCANNING FOR HIS ENERGY SIGNATURE, LIKE YOU SAID, AND—AND—I KNOW WHERE HE IS!
OVERLORD?
FINALLY.
EVERYONE—TO THE SHIP!
TO THOSE OF YOU WHO CAN STILL HEAR ME—CONGRATULATIONS. YOU'VE BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST.
AND GRIMLOCK—DON'T WORRY. WE'LL WORK OUR WAY DOWN TO YOU EVENTUALLY.

EPILOGUE


WHAT KIND OF A STUNT WAS THAT?
I SHOULD BE DEAD.
DON'T GET ME WRONG, I'M GLAD I'M NOT. BUT... BEING DEAD IS KINDA THE UNAVOIDABLE SIDE EFFECT.
YEAH, THAT'S PROBABLY OUR FAULT. FIRST THING WE DID WHEN WE FOUND YOU WAS REMOVE YOUR EXPLOSIVE CHARGE. WE DIDN'T WANT YOU BLOWING UP WHILE WE WERE FRISKING YOU FOR SPARES.
BUT—THAT'S INCREDIBLE! THAT TAKES PHENOMENAL SKILL!
SPINISTER DID IT. STUPID AS HELL, BUT A GENIUS WITH HIS HANDS. DID I NOT MENTION THAT IN MY INTRODUCTION?
HE'LL LIVE, SINCE YOU ASKED.
POOR KROK. HIS SQUAD NEVER DID TURN UP...
I DON'T THINK THEY'LL EVER TURN UP.
NO? WHY?
JUST ASK HIM TO SHOW YOU WHAT'S IN HIS HAND SOMETIME—THEN YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.
WHAT'S THAT LOOK FOR? I CAN'T TELL WHETHER YOU WANT TO SHOOT ME, OR—ACTUALLY, THE SHOOTING VIBE IS ALL I'M GETTING.
WHY WERE YOU ON THE D.J.D.'S LIST?
I WAS, AH—I WAS CONVICTED OF COWARDICE.
WE WERE CYBERFORMING B'LAHR 39. I WAS PROJECT MANAGER AND, ER, YEAH—WE WERE ATTACKED BY THE AUTOBOTS. WHAT CAN I SAY? I'M A TECHIE. I RAN.
A FEW WEEKS LATER, MY SUPERIORS CAUGHT UP WITH ME.


"I WAS SENT TO STYX* AND SENTENCED TO DEATH BY TRAITOR'S WHEEL.
"ON THE DAY OF MY EXECUTION, THE ORDER CAME DOWN FROM ON HIGH: EVERY DECEPTICON PRISONER WAS TO BE RE-ENGINEERED, FITTED WITH A PAYLOAD AND FORCED TO JOIN THE K-SQUADS: A MARGINALLY LESS PAINFUL DEATH.
"I DUNNO IF YOU KNOW HOW K-CONS WORK, BUT ONCE YOU'VE JUMPED YOU CAN'T HELP BUT SWITCH TO BOMB MODE.
"EXCEPT IN MY CASE, NOTHING HAPPENED. YOU'VE HEARD OF THE PHRASE 'PARALYZED BY FEAR,' RIGHT?
"RIGHT?"
*THE DECEPTICON PENAL COLONY
ULTRA MAGNUS

HE'S TRYING TO GET UP. WHAT DO WE DO? FULCRUM?
THE WAR'S OVER, CRANKCASE. WE HELP HIM UP.

I'LL HANDLE THIS.
DON'T INTRODUCE HIM TO EVERYONE.

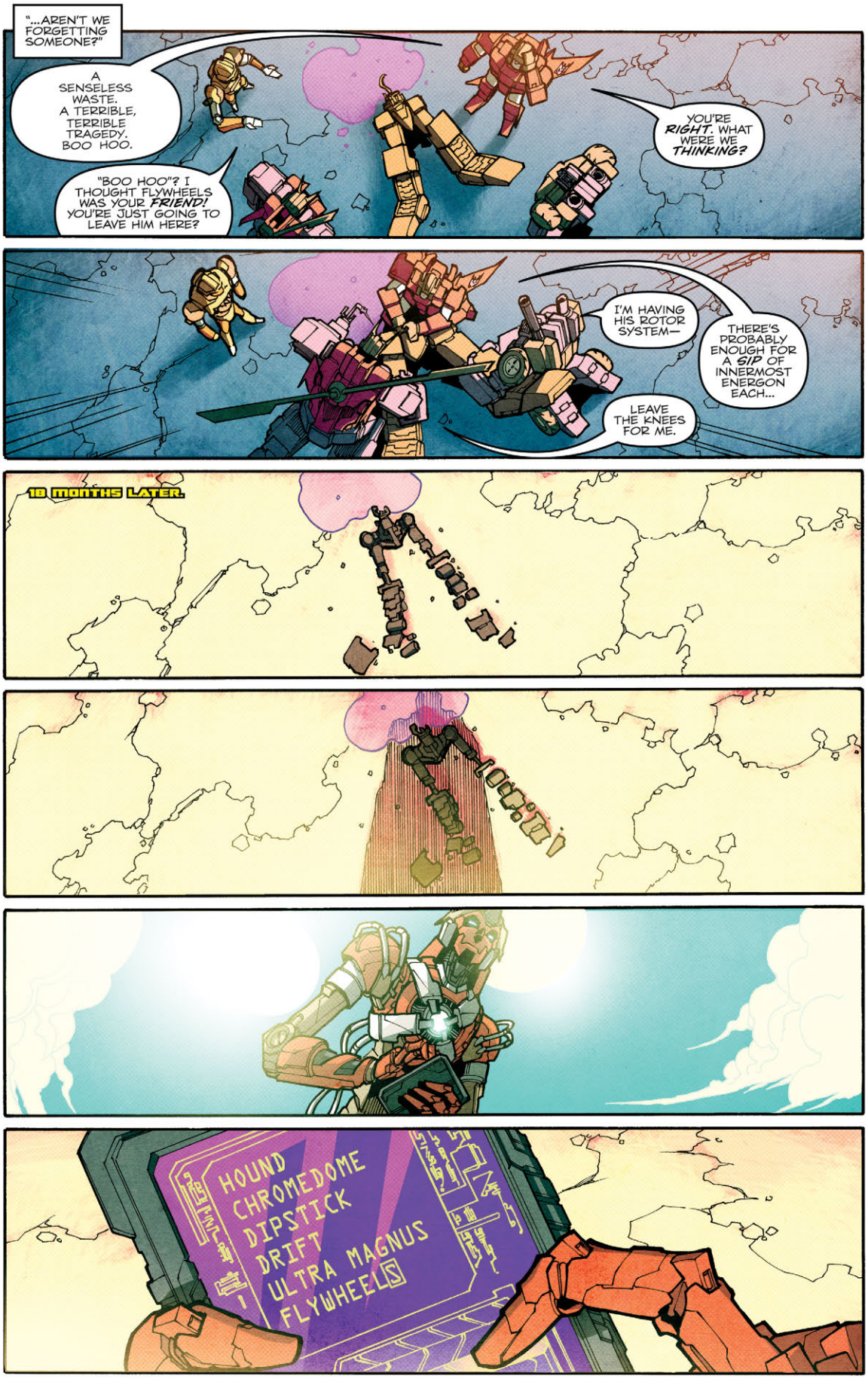
LOOK AT MY HANDS, GRIMMY.

EMERGENCY HUDDLE.

THAT'S WHY HE WAS LEFT ON THE SHIP. HE'S PRACTICALLY BRAIN DEAD.
EVERYTHING WE SAW BEFORE—WITH THE D.J.D.—THAT WAS JUST INSTINCT.
HE CAN'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING WE'RE SAYING. I DON'T THINK HE EVEN KNOWS WHERE HE IS.
LET'S TAKE HIM WITH US.

LET'S GO BACK HOME TO CYBERTRON AND TAKE HIM WITH US.
BUT HE'S A SWORN ENEMY!

HELLO?
SORRY, FULCRUM—WE KINDA LOST INTEREST. COME OVER HERE AND CHECK *THIS* OUT.
HE STARTED MAKING LITTLE NOISES.
FIRST IT WAS FRIGHTENING, THEN IT WAS FUNNY, THEN IT WAS KINDA SAD. NOW IT'S FUNNY AGAIN.
YOU'RE WITNESSING A SOPHISTICATED FORM OF *MILITARY PARLEY*. IT'S CALLED A *TIME OUT*. IT MEANS NO FIGHTY-FIGHTY.
MUH.
"MUH"? MUH *WHAT?*
MUH.
...MISFIRE?
MORTILUS? MOONBASE 2? MILITANT MONOFORM MOVEMENT?
MUH.
MUH— MUH— MUH—
ME... GRIMLOCK.
IT'S CALLED HEDGING YOUR BETS.
IF THE *AUTOBOTS* HAVE WON, AND WE PITCH UP WITH ONE OF THEIR OWN IN TOW, HAVING TAKEN CARE OF HIM, THEN MAYBE— I DUNNO—MAYBE WE GET *FORGIVEN* OR *EXONERATED* OR WHATEVER NEEDS TO HAPPEN IN THIS CRAZY POSTWAR WORLD.
BUT IF US *'CONS* HAVE WON, THEN WE GET TO SAY, "LOOK, MEGS! WE'VE CAPTURED ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL AUTOBOTS OF ALL TIME!" AND *BANG!* WE'RE HEROES! HONOR RESTORED!
THAT—AMAZINGLY—MAKES SENSE. THAT IS A KROK-WORTHY PLAN.
SO IT'S SETTLED: WE'LL FIX UP KROK, SCOOP UP GRIMSY, POWER UP THE W.A.P.* AND SET COURSE FOR CYBERTRON.
OOOH-KAY... BUT BEFORE WE RUSH OFF AND HAVE ALL SORTS OF ADVENTURES...
*THE SCAVENGERS' SHIP


"...AREN'T WE FORGETTING SOMEONE?"
A SENSELESS WASTE. A TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE TRAGEDY. BOO HOO.
"BOO HOO"? I THOUGHT FLYWHEELS WAS YOUR FRIEND! YOU'RE JUST GOING TO LEAVE HIM HERE?
YOU'RE RIGHT. WHAT WERE WE THINKING?
I'M HAVING HIS ROTOR SYSTEM—
THERE'S PROBABLY ENOUGH FOR A SIP OF INNERMOST ENERGON EACH...
LEAVE THE KNEES FOR ME.
18 MONTHS LATER.
HOUND
CHROMEDOME
DIPSTICK
DRIFT
ULTRA MAGNUS
FLYWHEELS

RODIMUS
Commander of the Lost Light Autobots/One-time Matrix holder
Brave, charismatic, reckless. Easily bored.

ULTRA MAGNUS
Second in command/ Duly Appointed Enforcer of the Tyrest Accord
Takes job (and everything else) extremely seriously. Smiled once and regretted it ever since.

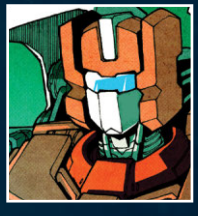
DRIFT
Nominal third in command
Ex-Decepticon. Longs to be defined in some other way. Recent brush with death has reawakened his spiritual side.

BRAINSTORM
Weapons engineer/ prolific murderer
Amoral, single-minded workaholic and possible genius. Carries briefcase containing The Unmentionable.

RATCHET
Chief Medical Officer/ prolific life-saver
A world-weary super-medic with unreliable hands. Kind, but not as kind as he once was.

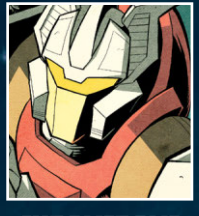
RED ALERT
Director of Security
Professional eavesdropper. Part-time conspiracist. Full-time paranoiac.

WHIRL
Warrior/practicing troublemaker
Ex-Wrecker. Twice voted "Autobot most likely to defect." Best avoided.

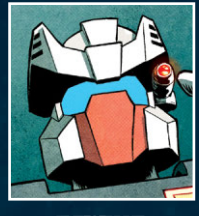


FIRST AID
Cheif Medical Officer in training
Wreckers-fan with ~~an obsession~~ a passing interest in Autobot badges.

SWERVE
Metallurgist
Good friend to all, best friend to none. Weapon of choice: the mouth.



CHROMEDOME
Mnemosurgeon
Cynical. Prone to moping. Resents own talents. Relies on Rewind to keep him honest.



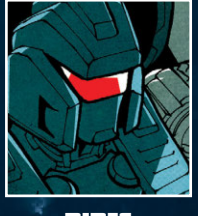
REWIND
Archivist/Historian
A walking database. Excitable and trusting. Uses head-mounted camera to record history as it happens.

CYCLONUS
Ex-lieutenant of Galvatron
Dour and unrepentant. A fierce patriot still reeling from the loss of "his" Cybertron.

TAILGATE
Bomb disposal
Making up for lost time...

SKIDS
Theoretician
Carefree amnesiac who never lets go of his gun.

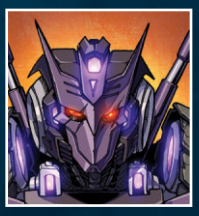
TRAILBREAKER
One trick pony
Resents the forcefield that made him famous. Likes a drink.



PIPES
Aspiring Explorer
Trying hard to be more impulsive. Not having a good time of it, lately.

VOS

A scientist and sadist who communicates exclusively in the Primal Vernacular (a.k.a. Old Cybertronian).



TARN

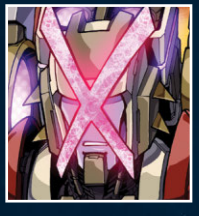
Decepticon fundamentalist and softly-spoken leader of the D.J.D. Music lover, classical scholar, and mass murderer. Addicted to changing shape.

KAON

Turns into an electric chair. Maintains "The List." In charge of communications.

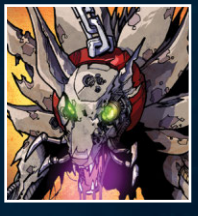
HELEX

"The walking smelting pool." Chest furnace can melt enemies in seconds.



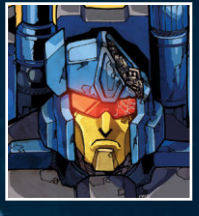
TESARUS

Enjoys eviscerating enemies by feeding them through the tunnel in his torso. Easily bored.



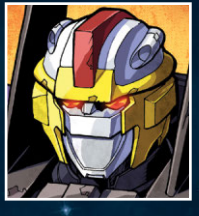
THE PET

Partly domesticated sparkeater



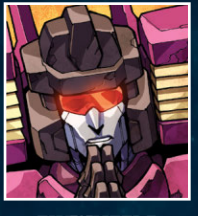
CRANKCASE

Mechanic and pilot. Horrific head injury did nothing to lighten his perpetually foul mood.



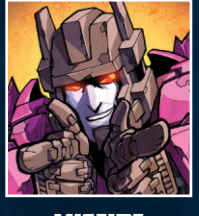
KROK

Paternalistic military strategist and war historian on a mission to find his old squad.



FLYWHEELS

Jittery hypochoindriac with disproportionately large feet. Had recently discovered organized religion. Good source opf spare parts.

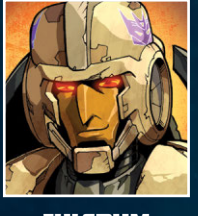


MISFIRE

Proof that high-caliber weapons and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder don't mix.

SPINISTER

Flits between childlike wonder and acts of extreme violence. Distrust everything within shooting distance. Ace surgeon.



FULCRUM

Honorary member of the Scavengers thanks to his affable nature and his impressive chin.

☐ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #4 COVER RI

BY **MARCELO MATERE** COLORS BY **PRISCILLA TRAMONTANO**

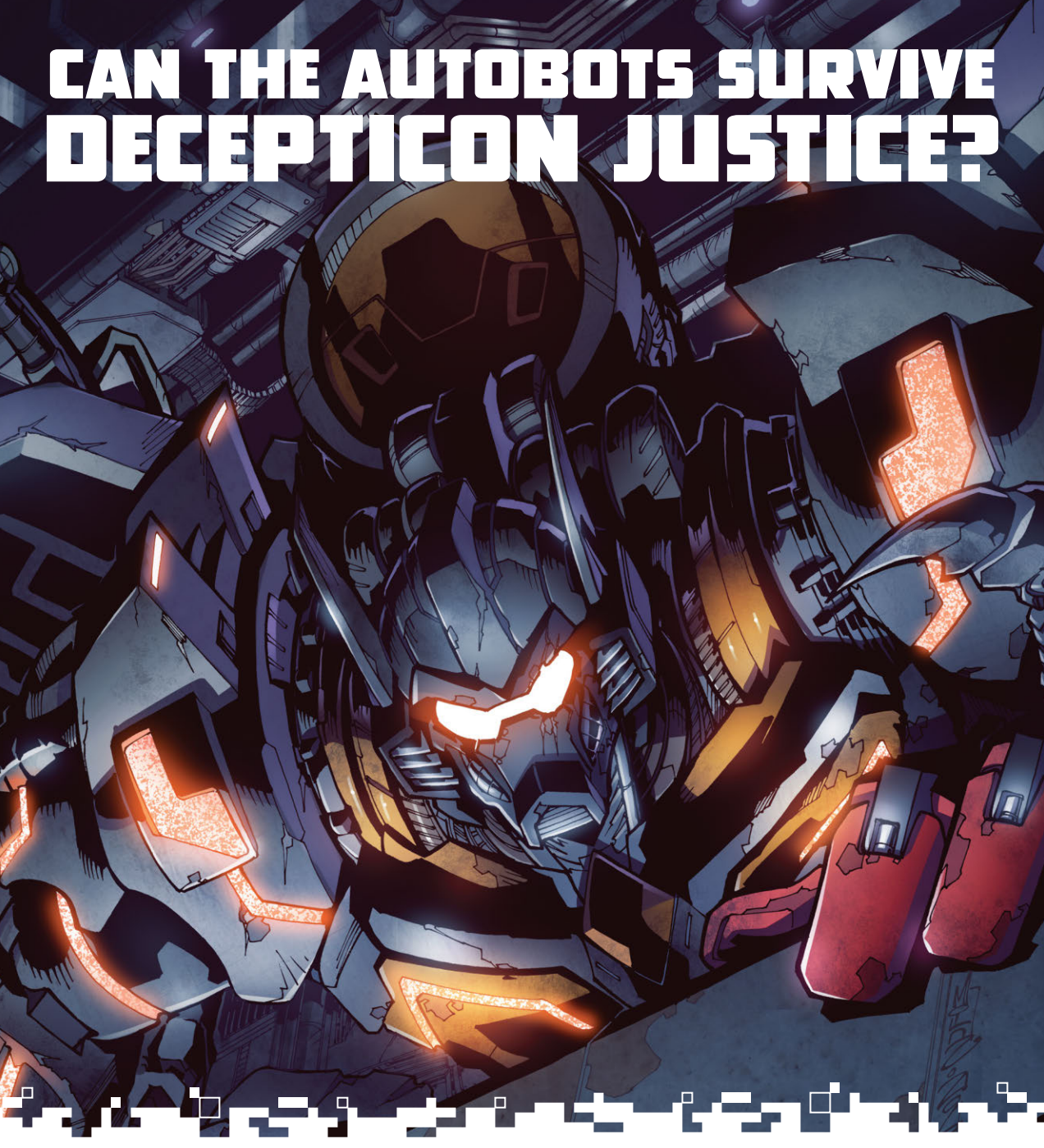
☐ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #7 COVER RI

BY **MARCELO MATERE** COLORS BY **PRISCILLA TRAMONTANO**

☐ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #8 COVER RI
BY **MARCELO MATERE** COLORS BY **PRISCILLA TRAMONTANO**

☐ MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #5 COVER RI

BY **MARCELO MATERE** COLORS BY **PRISCILLA TRAMONTANO**



More Than Meets The Eye continues! Ratchet, Rodimus, the Decepticon Justice Division, and Grimlock all take turns on the center stage as the adventures of the starship *Lost Light*, in search of the Knights of Cybertron, takes the crew into dangerous territory.

IDW